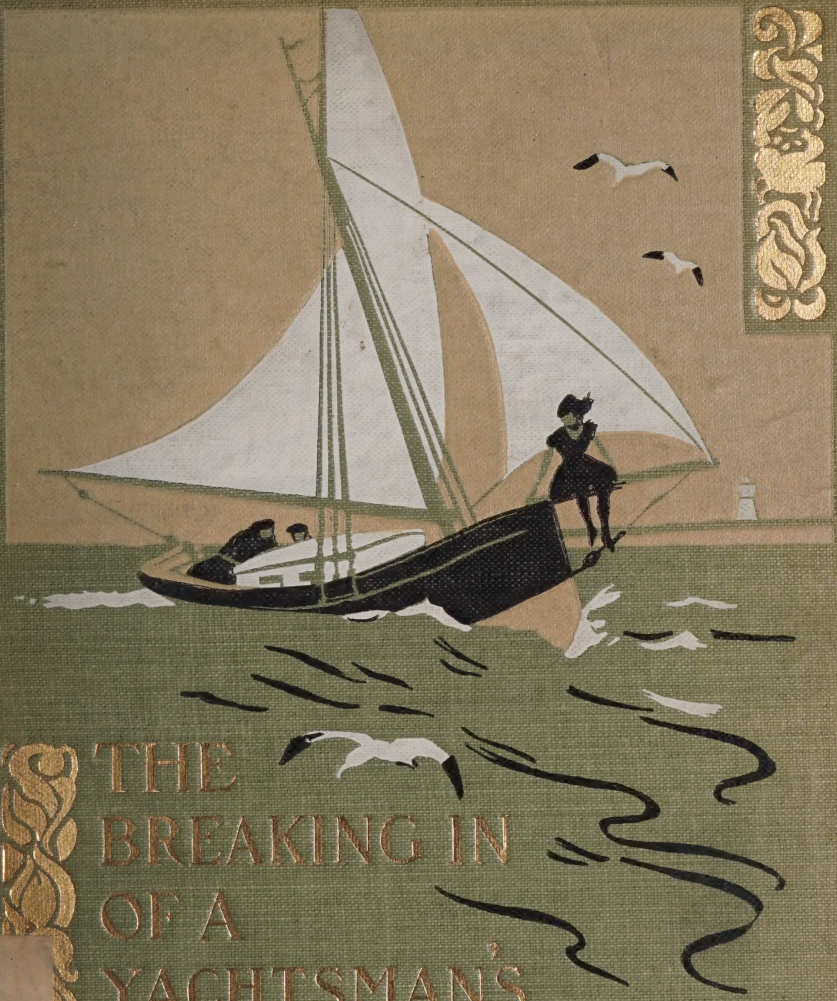

THE BREAKING IN OF A YACHTSMAN'S WIFE

By MARY HEATON VORSE

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THE BREAKING IN OF A YACHTSMAN'S WIFE

BREAKING IN

THE·BREAKING·IN·OF A·YACHTSMAN'S·WIFE

BY·MARY·HEATON·VORSE

WITH · ILLUSTRATIONS
BY·REGINALD·B·BIRCH

BOSTON·AND·NEW·YORK
HOUGHTON·MIFFLIN·AND·COMPANY
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CONTENTS

Prologue 1

I. The Warning of Israfil 7

II. The Lesson of Silence 19

III. The Joy of Boats 31

IV. Marianna overreaches 45

V. I buy the Tar Baby 53

VI. Guests 63

VII. The Value of the Usual . . . 75

VIII. The Boat and the Baby Carriage 95

IX. The Lure of Je l'Aimais 111

X. Stan learns to sail 125

XI. The Cruise of the Quinze Mille Vièrges 139

XII. The Conscience and the Gondola 151

XIII. The Failing of the Conscience . 167

CONTENTS

XIV. The Disintegration of the Conscience 181

XV. The Annihilation of the Conscience 191

XVI. The Cheap Boat 201

XVII. The Cheapness of the Boat . . 213

XVIII. The "Learning" of Gregory . . 227

XIX. Gregory learns 239

XX. Gregory learned 249

XXI. Broken in 263

ILLUSTRATIONS

Breaking in . . . . . Frontispiece

I thought he was going to shed Tears . . . 14

"*My Folks just getting over the Measles*" . 28

We only take our Legs in for Sea-going Yachts 42

"*You don't care for your Boat — not really*" 48

The Solicitous Old German Ladies . . . 60

He would draw Little Diagrams 66

A Motor Boat the Like of which I never saw 92

I the Skipper followed the Procession . . . 102

He made a Boat of his Hands 122

He was a Venal Beast 130

We were pointed out afterwards on the Beach 148

In it stood a Red-faced Gondolier 158

Stan catches a Venetian Crab 172

He flung out his Hands sidewise 188

Having its Smooth Planks bent into Shape . 196

ILLUSTRATIONS

Hard-headed Men who prod with Jackknives 204

Running to "Ed's" for a Quart of Turpentine 224

The Next Day she could dive standing up . 230

Mary Hollingsworth waded ashore . . . 244

He called Captain Newcomb into the Conclave 256

Rowing out to hoist Sails after the Rain . 274

PROLOGUE

THE BREAKING IN OF A YACHTSMAN'S WIFE

WE knew every boat in our harbor, and so we could be sure that the strange yawl must be putting in just for the night. We had left the Tar Baby at her mooring, and we rowed closer to the new boat. She was the Mary Ellen, about thirty-five feet over all, and beautifully appointed in every particular.

An awning was spread over the Mary Ellen's cockpit, and under it sat a plump, gray-haired old lady, placidly darning a sock. From time to time she looked out over the Sound, where from every direction little sails made for the harbor like a flock of homing pigeons.

A gray-haired man now came out of the cabin and fell to polishing the brass fittings which so prettily adorned his yacht. He was working, it was plain, because he enjoyed pottering around his boat, not because the brass needed further brightening. Now and then he would stoop to coil a rope still more symmetrically. As we passed them, he dropped his

chamois overboard and we picked it up for him. So we pulled up alongside and chatted a moment. The old lady joined her husband, with a half-darned sock in her hand. They asked us if we had been sailing, and we pointed out the Tar Baby, and asked them if they had ever seen an uglier boat. We had our own pride in the Tar Baby's appearance. We loved to believe that she had one distinction: she was a boat ugly beyond compare, unless, indeed, you except the Stingy, a home-made boat which lived up Mamaroneck way. One can, you see, always find something to be proud of in one's boat, even if it is only its ugliness, and even in ugliness there is competition. Rumors, for instance, had come to us from the owners of the Galloping Soup Tureen, a fresh-water boat, who pretended that it ran the Tar Baby a close second. Our old couple were not to be outdone by the ugliness of our boat, for the old lady hastened to say: —

"When we were first married, we owned an old tub that would make that little black boat of yours look like a prize beauty. She was as high-sided as the vessel Columbus came over in that they exhibited at the World's Fair."

"And about as quick in the stays as a hen-coop," added the old gentleman.

"Her name was the Mary Ellen," said the old lady. "Many a fine sail we had with her in spite of all. When I was young, yachting was n't heard of much; we just went sailing."

"This is the first boat I ever had built just to suit myself, and we named it after the old Mary Ellen," interrupted the old gentleman, who was bursting with pride over his lovely boat.

"And we 're taking our first cruise in her. We started at Staten Island, and we 're going round by New London to Peconic Bay."

"Yes," said the old gentleman, "my wife insisted on being towed through Hell Gate! Is n't that just like a woman?"

"Yes, indeed I did," said the old lady, with spirit. "I just have my heart set on this cruise!"

And as we pulled away we could hear the old gentleman declare: "Why, I could take the Massachusetts through Hell Gate!"

I reflected that here was another of those women who have my way of keeping account of the passing years. For I divide my life into spaces which correspond to the boats we have owned. I have known old people whose lives

were cut up into hemispheres, before the Chicago fire and after the Chicago fire. People with only one division, like this, are very simple-minded and easily satisfied. All of which show that we are not far removed from the notched-stick age. Some women take account of time by the houses they have lived in; others count by some desolation which has occurred. I have my own way of keeping score. It is by boats, as I have said, which shows what a great part boats have played in my life. For we have played the most fascinating of all games, the game of yachting, as seriously as if it were our life-work. We have played it as seriously as children play their games; and before one really gets the full flavor out of any sport, one must make a work of it. Really to play, one must forget that one is playing. And indeed, learning to be a yachtsman's wife was no play to me. It would have gone ill with me had I approached my task with levity, so it happens that the logs of the cruises which we took in our boats become in reality the log of my life.

I hope that I may always keep the log of my life by our boats. I hope that when I am old I may sit in the cockpit of my own boat, and

darn my husband's socks while he potters round and polishes already spotless brass; and that I shall see the sun set over some harbor, and with my old eyes watch the little yachts come home, as I have so often watched them when I was young. I would sit there while the little riding-lights came out like erratic stars, and see other cabins light up with a golden glow, as our windows would presently glow; and as we ate our supper, I too would like to squabble with my husband as to whether he could take the boat through Hell Gate or not. And I wondered if, when that plump old lady first sailed on the old Mary Ellen, she made as many mistakes as I did the first summer I was married and went sailing; for the breaking in of a yachtsman's wife is no easy thing, and in my case it needed an enthusiast like Stanford.

THE WARNING OF ISRAFIL

CHAPTER I

LTHOUGH I did not realize it, I started learning to be a yachtsman's wife when I was only engaged to be married. My first cruise was a cruise on dry land. I enjoyed it but little and understood its significance less, for had I known how to read the signs aright, I could have foretold much of my future life from an episode which occurred when Stan and I were visiting friends near Boston. When Stan proposed a trip to Nantasket for the sake of visiting an old love of his, a boat he had once owned, in my ignorance I saw in this proposal only an excuse for an outing alone with me. Together we made a pious pilgrimage to this beloved boat. Stanford had sold her to a friend who had married, and the poor old Israfil was rotting and drying herself out, hauled up at Nantasket.

Except in spring, when the boats are being put in the water, a boatyard is a sad place to me. In winter the boats, clumsy and uncomfortable as all water-fowl ashore, wait patiently

for summer under their canvas coverings, their naked masts pointing at the cold sky, and huddle together like a flock of forlorn stormbound birds hibernating in an alien country. In midsummer a boatyard is even more desolate. Then it is depopulated, and there is left only a sad collection of undesirables, — the boats that won't sell; the boats whose owners have deserted them; boats of antiquated models, clumsy and appealing; boats which were built for speed, but have somehow failed, and are good neither for cruising nor racing. Here and there among the general dinginess is a yacht that has been given a fresh coat of paint in the hope of attracting some buyer, and this smartness is more pathetic than the shabby genteelness of the other boats.

The ample space of the shaving-littered yard shows cruelly every fault of line and build. There is no hiding in a crowd now, as there was in winter. There they sit, poor things, and watch the endless procession of boats on the ways, which come up one after another for a new coat of paint and presently sail away again. I should not like to be a boat that had to spend a summer in a shipyard. I should have to watch my companions of the winter overhauled one by

one and see them, finally clothed in their white sails, go gladly away, while my spars remained bare. All summer long I should have to watch the boats at anchor and see them bend to the wind, while the sun was shrinking my timbers. And the boats which came back to be smartened up would say to me, "What? Have n't they put you in the water yet?"

This first time that I visited a shipyard the forlornness struck me with double force; all the boats looked equally depressed and neglected to my inexperienced eye. So that when Stanford exclaimed, "Look at that peach!" or "Is n't she a dream?" I was unresponsive.

Here and there men were at work, and Stanford stopped to chat with them. Of course I was n't interested, and being only engaged, I looked it.

Stanford turned to me reproachfully. "Of course you don't understand, you *can't* understand, how much it all means to me," he said.

I did n't deny it.

Suddenly he stopped! "There she is!" he exclaimed, with the light in his eyes of one who sees a dear old friend. "There 's the Israfil!"

There squatted a fat old tub. She was nearly

as broad as she was long, a patch had been let into her side, her mast was gray, and her dirty paint was scaling off in leprous patches. She did not even present an appearance of decorous old age; dirty and frowsy as she was, she had a jovial air, as if she had enjoyed life and did n't give a hang in how disreputable a garb she passed her declining years. An air of austere decay lingered around some of the other boats, which, even in their forlornness, showed noble lines or signs of past grandeur. Not so the Israfil. Had she been a woman, she would have been as round as a ball, worn no corsets, had a stubby red nose, and perhaps even smoked a pipe.

We managed to scramble aboard the disreputable old craft. I had ceased to exist as an individual in Stan's eyes; I was merely a pair of ears to be talked into. Any one would have done as well. I realized this, and I resented it, for I was in that egotistical state of mind when I wished Stanford to think only of me.

"Darned old craft!" he said affectionately. "She always leaked; we never could make her tight;" and he looked over to me for approval of this amiable trait of the Israfil!

We stumbled into the little cabin, which smelled damp and tarry.

"Bully old place!" said Stanford, with enthusiasm. "George! look at that, Margery, there 's the water-bottle — the same old water-bottle!"

He talked as if he had discovered diamonds; all that I could see was a tiresome old demijohn.

"Here 's the nail where I hung the clock. Look at those lockers; they 'd never shut, and when they did, it took a chisel and hammer to open 'em. I kept the marlin there."

He thrust his hand in and brought out a smelly black ball of string. He gazed at the disgusting lump in ecstatic silence. I thought he was going to shed tears.

"Have you ever noticed how a familiar perfume will bring back things to you," he said dreamily. "How I love the tarry smell of marlin. Smell!" and he thrust the nasty bunch toward me.

"Did I ever tell you about the time we were nearly wrecked off Thatcher's, and all the other fellows were seasick, and I had to hold the tiller all night in a driving rain? Wet! Well, I guess! Those were happy times! It 's delightful to have such memories behind one. That 's one of the

things a girl can never have. Now I never wake up in the night with cold feet without thinking of that trip.

"The mother of a young chap who wanted to begin his sea-life, put him and a couple of other college boys in my charge, to go down to Kennebunkport, where they lived in the summer. So we got the old craft under way, meaning to make a day's run of it; but off Nahant it fell a flat calm, and we tossed up and down, and my little boys all went to bed, poor little chaps. The calm lasted until night, and then it breezed up, and by the time we were off Gloucester there came in a roaring northeaster. We got around the Londoner all right, not more than a hundred feet away. Gad! what emotions you can get up on the water! I don't suppose anybody on earth hates another man as much as a seaman hates a reef. I remember yet how I hated that big pile of foam!"

"Why did you hate it?" I asked. "I like foam!"

Stan looked at me helplessly.

"Foam means rocks to a yachtsman. I don't suppose I can make you understand," he went on. "Well, where was I?" and he took up his

I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO SHED TEARS

tale in a rather monotonous voice. I saw that I had spoiled one of his best stories, but being engaged, I did n't care much. I did n't like things that diverted his attention from me.

"Well, there was n't much of it. My youngsters were calling for toast and water, and I was quite ready to go in, so we put into Gloucester. It was about four o'clock in the morning, and I was anxious to turn in. So we came to the nearest anchorage we could inside the breakwater. We ran through a fisherman's net on the way, and bumped up against some of the barrels, and it must have started a plank or something; anyhow there was a leak, but we were too tired to care for that. The water was swashing around the cabin floor. There was room for three of us on the bunks and on the transom, and there was no place for me to sleep except my suit-case, so I coiled up on that. I like to sleep," he explained, "stretched out, not in a ball, and of course instinctively I stretched myself out, and every once in about twenty minutes I would wake up with my feet off that suit-case, in the water. Lud, how cold it was!

"Next morning we pulled up at a wharf. We were taking up some wine to Kennebunkport

for the boy's mother, and the sheriff of Gloucester thought we were trying to rush it in there — against the law, you know — and sent a posse of men to watch the boat as it was tied up at the wharf. That did n't prevent one of the wharf toughs from breaking open the cabin while we were away having a bath, and knocking the top off of some bottles of champagne. We got there just in time to see him run away, and to find a bottle spouting out its last gasp into the bilge-water. That was too much for my youngster's two friends, and they went to Kennebunkport by train."

"Sensible boys!" I thought to myself; but some budding instinct kept me from saying it aloud.

"Well," continued Stan, "we two lay out the storm in Gloucester. We put to sea in a little sou'west wind, a zephyr. It hardly sent us through the water, and it was night again before we passed Thatcher's, and my kid was all ready to go ashore again, — you see, the northeaster had left a big sea. So I headed her for Rockport while he turned in. I did n't know much about the channel, and in just one minute we were in the breakers. Gad, but it seemed a

time before she fell off! I expected every minute to feel that sickening bump that a vessel's keel makes on a rock, when the waves let you down. Two or three seas came aboard. The cockpit was afloat, and I suppose the cabin was too, but she did fall off at last. I did n't dare to try for Rockport again, so I just headed her north for the Isles of Shoals. The compass was queer, and I did n't dare to trust it. At first I had the north star to steer by, but by and by it clouded up, and I got a lantern and went on with the compass.

"It 's queer," continued Stan, in the caressing tone with which one treats a dear memory, "how being out alone at night on the sea makes one superstitious. Now, a few nights before, a lot of people had been sitting around a fire telling ghost stories. They did n't have any effect on me at the time, but that night, you see, the lights of the lantern shone in my eyes, so I covered it with a pillow. Pretty soon the pillow began to scorch, and I chucked it up on the house. It so happened that the shadow of that pillow on the sail took exactly the form of an old Jew in a Russian cap, and a feather waving to and fro gave the thing a finger which beckoned to me. I can't tell you how weird the

whole thing was, — the boat plunging down into the waves, and the sails slatting out as the wind took them when she rode on the crest, the pitch darkness, and the wind beginning to blow harder and harder.

"I never expected to get through it. There was n't any real danger, I can see now, but it seemed like the end of everything. And then the contrast of it! At daybreak the kid got well of his seasickness, for the sea had gone down, and came out and took the helm, — he had had plenty of experience in harbor sailing, — and I turned in; and when I woke up two hours afterwards, the sea was just one kindly ripple in the sunlight, and the Isles of Shoals were all green and fresh waiting for us. It was a bully run!"

I sniffed.

"Oh, you can't understand. Girls don't know," he said, half sadly, half contemptuously.

I might have been his sister instead of his fiancée.

"*You* don't care for things, not really," he repeated.

But I went on deck, leaving him in the snuffy, smelly cabin, and musing over the happy days when he had been nearly drowned.

THE LESSON OF SILENCE

CHAPTER II

STAN is a man full of common sense, unconventional to a fault, and broad-minded; indeed, if he has an intolerance, it is for the prejudices of others. He has the faults of his virtues; for instance, he is disorderly in a large and open-handed way, and in the first months of our married life made fun of me for my old-fashioned ideas about good housekeeping. Oh, he sent my little old-maidish ways flying like leaves before the wind with his chaff. He was aided in this by our friend Phil Temple, who was constantly at the house.

A different point of view came to me in the company of these two genial people, both unconventional, each full of tolerance for the other's opinions, and each able to take a joke at his own expense. I found myself in a new world, where most of the things that I had been taught to think mattered immensely did not seem to matter at all. "The needless conventionalities of women," was one of the things which my husband and his friend talked most prettily about.

A woman requires much recuperative force and much adaptability, for at best her world is an unstable one, and mine, my new one — and I was secretly proud of having adapted myself to Stan's mode of thought so quickly — was knocked to pieces in a shipyard in City Island by a sloop called Marianna, a Burgess model, twenty-eight feet over all, a twenty-foot water-line, and drawing four feet eight inches of water.

"Look at that dream!" my husband exclaimed. "Lord, how I'd like that boat!"

"Oh, come, Stan," said Phil. "You don't mean you'd buy that brick church. Look at the house on her, man; it's like an observatory!"

"I suppose what you like is a flush deck," sneered my husband.

"Well, I should rather think I did," Phil stated, with warmth. "I like a yacht that looks like a yacht, and not like a three-story office-building. Golly, look at that house!" The house was of mahogany, very much in need of a scraping, but I saw nothing queer about it.

"What's the matter with it, Phil?" I asked, as much to keep Stanford from replying as anything else.

"Gee! is n't that like a girl?" asked Phil, with disgust. Stanford looked disgusted, too; they might disagree about the boat, but they were of one contemptuous mind about me.

"That 's just like one of your dry-land yachtsmen," Stan continued, taking up the thread of the argument. "Everything for looks! You don't know what a decent boat is. You chaps have n't grasped the fact, here on the Sound, that a yacht is intended to sail in, and is not a parlor ornament, or part of a landscape-garden effect. You don't know what a man needs at sea. George! the boats I see around here make me sick. This boat 's got head-room. That 's what one wants for a cruise — head-room!"

"Head-room be buttered!" replied Phil. "Buy a boat with a house like a grain-elevator, for all I care, but don't expect me to sail with you."

"You could go to sea in that boat," said Stan, heated with argument. "Look at her keel!"

"Look at her keel! I should say I did look at her keel," replied his tolerant friend. "Why, she 's built like a snow-plow! Stan," Phil argued, with feeling; "a boat like that 'll hang

you up on every rock between here and Stamford."

"I don't get hung up on rocks," Stan gave back, with offended dignity.

I looked on in amazement. "Take things lightly," was one of my husband's favorite maxims; he had often laughed condescendingly over women's "strained and earnest ways" in discussing things.

I did some quick thinking, and the sum of my thinking was, that this was a good time for me to keep quiet.

My breaking in had begun.

Of course we bought the Marianna. We could not afford her; it was folly — it was madness — and we committed the folly gloriously, without remorse, in spite of Phil, who prophesied gloomily that it would take "two, perhaps three, hundred dollars to make that last-year's bird's-nest look like a boat," and asked Stan scornfully why he did n't go into the antiquity business. To my surprise, Phil had moved out into the country soon after we did, in order to be able to fight more at his ease with Stanford, and they fought hotly almost every night. Their fists pounded

the table. The fetish of freedom from prejudice was left as definitely behind in the city as the dining-room furniture.

"Phil knows as much about boats as a purple ass," Stanford informed me.

Phil confided to me: "Queer, while Stan's such a clever chap, he can't tell a canal-boat from a cup defender."

I have noticed that all yachtsmen hold the same opinion of one another's knowledge of boats.

In the eyes of the world I was still a bride, but I realized, as I had begun to realize that day in the Israfil's cabin, that to Stanford I was merely some one to talk to about the beauties of his other love, and some one who was bound to be sympathetic, or he would know the reason why; and because of this, there arose between Stan and myself a long dispute.

As I look back on it, it seems fantastic and shadowy enough. It was a dispute possible only to the very young and ardent. But to-day I smile rather tenderly over the absurdities of Stanford and Margery, with their silly quarrel.

However, the hot enthusiasms of youth sometimes bear enduring fruit, and but for this I

might have been deprived all my life of the pleasure of pottering around my own boat.

Our dispute lasted all summer, and was in two parts. The first part as set forth by my husband was: —

"You don't really care for boats. You don't really care for the Marianna."

It was a grotesque position for me, for I was expected not only to approve that my husband loved another, but I was even expected to love my rival as he did, which I set myself to do with might and main. In my exasperation I told Phil one day: —

"Women in a harem have a hard time of it."

"I suppose they do," said Phil uncomprehendingly.

But a light gleamed in the eye of young Morris, who boarded in our impossible boarding-place in New Rochelle, and I saw that I was understood, which is a comfort when one is in the midst of such a strange rivalry as I was.

Morris was one of those God's fools who go through life hampered by too much insight and too little sincerity, and whom other men call Ass or Wit according to their own intelligence.

To prove how dearly I loved her, I begged

to be allowed to help get the Marianna in the water, and I went with the men to City Island, and was allowed, first, the privilege of sandpapering, next, the joy of scraping varnish, and lastly, the ecstasy of painting. Stan acted as if he were doing me a great favor to let me work on the boat at all, and I realize now that he was — most men would have left their wives at home. At the time I did n't appreciate my blessings. I worked on grimly, with blistered hands and aching back, and I looked with a certain sour cynicism that only youth knows upon Stan's evident joy in the grooming of his Marianna.

I had not yet obtained my reward.

The next day I went out alone to City Island to work on the boat. I was going to show Stan whether I cared or not!

It was the rush season, and the owner of the shipyard could put none of his own men to work, and we had with difficulty secured a ship's carpenter. He was a long, lean, and gentle one.

"I dunno as I ever seen a girl work on a boat before," he volunteered. Then, after a moment, "I dunno as there 's any good reason why they should n't," he decided, with that tolerance which makes all things possible in America.

The shipyard was full of all sorts of cheerful noises: planes whished, hammers clanged, there was the hiss of the burning-off of paint, and the cheerful slap, slap of the fat paint-brushes on the sides of boats. Above it all rose the shrill whine of sharpening files, and the loud cry of scrapers against hard varnish. The air was full of pleasant smells, of new wood, of paint and varnish.

I do not know how it was, but the spirit of the place took hold of me, and there fell from me the dogged feeling of "do or die." It was with enthusiasm that I followed Jameson's instructions. I began to scrape the bottom of the Marianna.

He was a nice fellow to work with, silent, for the most part, as a tree; and when he spoke, no words of David Harum wisdom fell from his honest lips. Rather, harmless pieces of gossip, like: —

"M' folks just getting over the measles. M' sister May she 's had 'em three times."

We lunched together in the shadow of a boat.

Groups of other people sat around eating their lunches, and the men of the yard passed by to say, "Gettin' to be quite a ship's carpenter, ain't ye?"

"MY FOLKS JUST GETTING OVER THE MEASLES"

I felt as if I had come home. There was nothing whatever remarkable about any of it, but the charm of the whole thing was upon me. I loved the big masts spiring above me, and the multitude of boats sitting there so patiently during their overhauling — when, if they had any spirit at all, they must have longed to be gone on the gay Sound water; and it flattered me to feel that I was a part of this world of people who made boats — though all I was doing was sandpapering.

So Jameson and I worked side by side. I must have been far more of a hindrance than a help, though he, kind man, never showed it, and he prepared me for what was to be my final initiation. He painted a water-line, and handed me the pot of red copper paint.

"Now swat it on good an' thick, an' see that you get it in all the nail-holes," he advised; and then it was that I was won over at once and for all; to this day there is nothing I like so well as to stand on the shady side of a boat, and to hear the peaceful slap, slap of my big paint-brush. I might get tired of it if I did it every day, and if the boats I painted were not my own boats. But when I hear people talk of

the joys of gardening, I smile to myself, because I know that those are feeble pleasures compared with that of seeing one's boat grow bright under one's hands.

No one who has not worked on his own boat will understand this; there is a certain happiness of working with your own hands over things you love that is deeper than other joys. Women know it oftener than men — I speak now of the men and women we call educated — for women work with loving care over their houses and their flowers and their children. Artists know it, of course, and they call it by different and high-sounding names, though I don't believe they always did. But whether it is housework well done, or cooking, or making a statue, or slapping paint on a boat, it is all fundamentally the same, though I would rather work on a boat.

So my first lesson was of silence, and my next of the joy of work.

Stanford, however, was not satisfied with my enthusiasm.

"You 're doing this because you 're fond of *me*, not of the Marianna," was the name of the second part of the quarrel.

THE JOY OF BOATS

CHAPTER III

SO my breaking in was begun in a curiously roundabout way. I knew the deep joy of covering spaces with bright, fresh paint. I had learned the charm of a shipyard before I knew anything about boats. I was "fond of sailing," of course, but there is an abysmal gap between that and Stanford's all-consuming passion for boats. I was to hear more of this, and that hearing began on our first sail on the Marianna.

We were scarcely under way when Stan, having handed the tiller to Phil, — who had condescended to come with us on the "brick church," — went below to get the official broom, and swept the deck.

"This boat is a sty — a regular sty," he said.

I have said before that he was disorderly in a genial way, forever making fun of me for my New England conscientiousness in keeping my house clean, and here he was sweeping off a deck which was speckless.

He sat down at last in the cockpit and looked

around anxiously; from time to time he got up and pounced on a bit of shaving, a string, a mote of dust; these he cast wrathfully overboard. He made me think of a New England housekeeper waiting for the Sewing Society. The day was warm, but Stanford bustled restlessly around the boat, and at last he disappeared into the cabin.

"I 've got to get something like order into this place," he announced, "I can't stand a cabin like this;" and we heard him fussing with dishes, rattling pans — in a word, working hard. Presently he reëmerged, red in the face, and lugging the cushions with him.

"I told that son of a lobster-pot to beat these cushions thoroughly," he grumbled. "I don't think he touched them. I 'll hustle his lazy carcass when I catch him! See here!" and he smote the cushion with his fist. A light cloud of dust arose. He took his knife and gravely cut the handle from the broom, and on the Sunday afternoon air was heard the steady thump, thump, thump of a stick on a mattress. Then he tried to brush the dust off the cushions, but the mutilated broom was too large and unwieldy.

After this he rested awhile with some serenity,

but his face clouded. "I can't stand it!" he exclaimed. "I thought I should be able to, but I can't. Look at those fittings! Meg, you're a shark about brass; could n't you get it cleaned somehow — you've got lots of time." Mind you, this was the man who could n't bear to see his wife wash a teacup.

He took out his pen and a card and wrote eagerly; then he handed the card to me. "There's nothing in this boat to work with," he said. "Meg, don't forget, will you, to put this card in your clothes and get these few little things to-morrow. Oh," he went on in despair, "there's no use sweeping, the Marianna is filthier than an oyster boat. I've got to swab the deck off."

Thereupon he dipped a bucket of water and got busy with the sawed-off broom. I looked over the list he had put in my hand; it read: —

1 broom.
1 whisk-broom.
3 cakes salt-water soap.
1 papier-maché bucket.
1 scrubbing-brush.
2 dust-rags or whatever you call 'em.
2 floor-rags like Anne uses on the floors.

1 large chamois bigger than the dinky one we have for silver.

1 jar or box of what you can get of best brass polish.

Cotton waste is good for rubbing.

Cloths and brushes for brass.

1 wicker thing like the one Anne whacks the rugs with.

1 gallon spar varnish (best quality).

3 sheets coarse sandpaper.

3 sheets fine sandpaper.

1 large scraper.

1 3-cornered scraper.

1 flat scraper.

1 first-class file.

1 ball marlin.

"I've got to have one or two of the things we need," explained Stan.

I read the list and made up my mind that there was a summer's work before me, compared with which house-cleaning would be a rest-cure. I was not far wrong.

For a while all was peaceful. We all knew the happiness that one can have only on a little boat close down to the bosom of the waters, a little boat that one is sailing one's self, that be-

longs to one's self alone. I understood once and for all why Stanford would have none of a rented boat. Phil and Stan no longer bickered. Phil lazily held the tiller. Stan was curled up somewhere before the mast, and I, after the manner of girls, dabbled my hand in the water on the leeward side. (I have since learned not to do this. It is a thing that irritates one's men, I don't know why.)

Other boats passed us — yawls, sloops, catboats, vulgar puffing launches loaded with brawling, yelling, Sunday fishermen, little launches shining and trim, with the burgee of some smart yacht club fluttering at their masts. Occasionally we rocked in the wake of a great steam yacht where people sat under awnings. I for one did n't envy them; they were not sailing; they knew none of the intimate joys of scraping and painting their own boats, and if they had committed extravagances as we had, it was not because of a great and dignified passion, but from some unworthy motive like the desire to shine. So I philosophized to myself, when suddenly the peace was broken by a cry, the cry of the man badly hurt. I sprang to my feet; Phil gripped the tiller.

"The jib sheet 's adrift!" Stan exclaimed. The jib sheet, which had been neatly coiled, had, after the unprincipled manner of ropes, become uncoiled, and sure enough was adrift. Any yachtsman of my husband's kind will understand his horror, but I barely knew a sheet from a halyard, and all my eyes saw was three or four feet of rope trailing rather untidily behind us. The sheet was fast to the cleats, and it seemed no great catastrophe to me. But Phil threw the tiller into my hand and hastily hauled the offending sheet inboard, while Stanford, the unconventional, the man who did n't care a hoot for his neighbors' opinions, lamented: —

"God knows how long that thing has been going on! The whole Sound may have seen us! We 'll be the laughing-stock of every little fresh-water yacht club if we keep on this way! Great heavens, with two of you back there, I should think you could keep all the rigging from going adrift!"

"I was sailing the boat," replied Phil shortly. One could see that he felt ashamed, and also that he felt that the bulk of the responsibility rested on me. (I have since found that most things that happened aboard were my fault.)

So that very first afternoon it dawned on me that the world of yachtsmen is a little world which has its own conventions, its own etiquette. Conventions, too, which are rigid, and which may not be broken.

Take the matter of making a mooring, for instance. In the world I found myself in, to miss a mooring was nothing short of a disgrace. And Stan, who would have smiled cheerfully if a whole dinner-party had gone wrong, would have wept tears of rage, I believe, if he had missed his mooring. It was that afternoon, too, I realized definitely what I had only vaguely suspected before, that to all intents and purposes I might as well have had two husbands to adapt my disposition to. How far his nature was changed once he got aboard a boat I can explain best by this little anecdote.

We came in one night after dark and picked our way daintily among the great company of boats moored in the New Rochelle harbor. I stood forward almost on the bowsprit and happily located the two harbor buoys. Now any one who knows this populous harbor knows that it takes nice sailing to come in against the wind on a black night, especially at low tide.

We slipped close under the stern of one of the cup defenders anchored far out, past big sea-going schooner yachts, racing sloops, and yawls, moved in and out among all the small fry, the many catboats and sneak-boxes, and made our mooring with great neatness. Then every one hurried to put up the sails. Stan was forward, lying flat on his tummy on the bowsprit putting up the jib, and sang out to me for more stops. So I stepped on what I thought was the bowsprit shrouds to hand him one. I had stepped off into nothingness, walked the plank neatly into the Sound, and as the water closed over my head I heard Stanford say: —

"Hell!"

I was aboard in a moment, and as Stanford put out a hand to help me he said to Phil: "Is n't that like a girl?" and Phil replied gloomily: "It 's lucky it 's night;" while little Morris threw their point of view into relief, with his "Oh, I hope you 're not hurt, Mrs. Dayton."

I have talked as if I were a young woman possessed of a great deal of tact, and who learned her various lessons with exemplary swift-

ness. But this is not true; I made plenty of mistakes, argued unnecessarily, asked foolish questions, and from first to last I have been quite unable to share Stanford's sensitiveness about what people could say. I know how he feels, and I respect his prejudices — sometimes; for a long time they seemed as quaint to me as my housewifely anxieties seemed to him.

For instance, that first year I did things that he has never ceased to shudder over. The Marianna was a wet boat, and if there was any wind at all, it was better to sail in one's bathing-suit. Now I was never quite so happy as when I got into a certain disreputable and faded bathing-suit of mine, and every yachtsman who likes to see his boat and his women-folk look smart will understand how poor Stanford must have suffered, when I tell you that I used to insist on sitting *in the bowsprit shrouds with the waves breaking over me.*

Nothing could keep me from the shrouds — neither command, nor sadness, nor anger. It was the height of happiness to me, and what unsettled Stan was that Phil used to come too. So did young Morris, who always sailed with

us, and whose high spirits altogether demoralized me, taking my mind off the serious work of being a yachtsman's helpmeet.

"You can't race this old steamer chair anyhow, Stan," Phil would argue, "so what do you care?" when poor Stanford would complain that we made her down by the head, and that everything on the Sound was passing us.

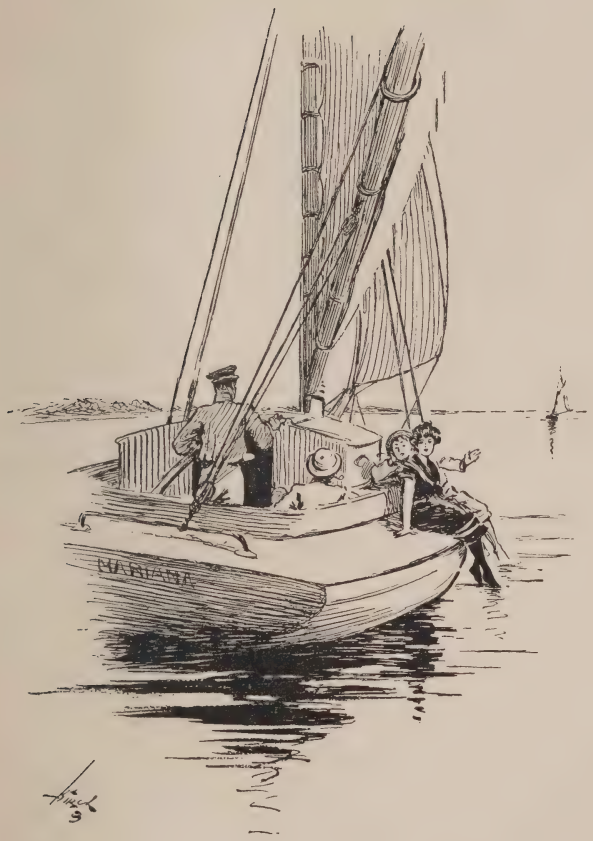
Then Stanford would plead with me.

"It is n't done, you know," he would argue. "Do you ever see the wives of other men sitting in the bowsprit shrouds? You know you don't. In all my experience, I have never seen any woman sitting where you are now!"

"'Try and get rid of unnecessary conventionalities. You don't know how life will broaden out when you do,'" I quoted flippantly; for I was sore at being made fun of so much about having walked into the water that night. After Phil and Stanford got over being shocked at me, they made one of those stupid family jokes out of it, and trotted it out before every one whom we took sailing.

Another part of my rebellion was to sit on the side of the boat with my legs in the water.

"Do take in your legs," Stan would implore



WE ONLY TAKE OUR LEGS IN FOR SEA-GOING YACHTS

me. "Don't you see Stimson's yawl overhauling us?"

"We only take in our legs for sea-going steam yachts," young Morris would reply gently, he sitting beside me, also dangling his legs; and Stimson's yawl, a beautiful, modern boat, would pass us by, Mrs. Stimson being arrayed in faultless white duck, leaving Stan melancholy with comparisons between his boat and wife and Stimson's boat and wife. He hated to have Stimson's boat pass us, although she was ten feet longer than we, and modern; and at least, he felt, his wife might have lived up to Stimson's.

MARIANNA OVERREACHES

CHAPTER IV

BUT even if I was rebellious, I worked over the Marianna with a pathetic devotion. Oh, the long, hot days I spent on my hands and knees on her deck, with the hot sun beating down on me, and how jealously I watched the honest Swede whose duty it was to dry the Marianna's sails and to swab the vile harbor mud off the Marianna's lovely white sides! and so I hope that for this devotion the recording angel will wipe from his book the record of my rebellious legs dangling overboard, Stimson's yawl or no, and that before my life is over I shall have expiated the sins of a girl in a faded and disreputable bathing-suit, who sat brazenly in the bowsprit shrouds in the face of all the yachts on Long Island Sound.

I carried my duty to the Marianna to extremes. It was my idea that the mahogany house should be scraped. I made small personal economies so that I could hire a man to help me. It took us a week to do it, for I could n't have the man

all the time, and I worked like a day laborer. Then, when the house had all the deep weather removed from it — the accomplishing of this removed most of the skin from my hands also — I had to go away on a visit, leaving the varnishing for Stan. When I got back, instead of the shining mahogany house that I had expected to find waiting for me, a house of dingy brown stared me in the face. I looked at it, silent. Stan was a little shame-faced.

"No, we did n't varnish her," he confessed — as if I needed to be told that! Those men actually had n't taken the trouble to get a little spar varnish and put it on, and my beautiful mahogany house, rained on and wet with the spray of the sea, had got weathered again. So I think that this in some ways offsets my sitting in the bowsprit shrouds.

This incident closed our battle about my caring for the Marianna. It was I who turned on Stan with: —

"You don't care for your boat — not really, or you 'd have found time to varnish her." It was a new lesson for me in being a yachtsman's wife, and it settled forever our dispute about my affection for my rival.

"YOU DON'T CARE FOR YOUR BOAT — NOT REALLY"

I was very stupid about learning to sail. I learned to know the ropes quickly enough, and to execute any given order with commendable swiftness, but I am afraid that first summer I did not understand very much what it was all about.

It was all I could do to adapt myself to this new Stanford, who ordered one about so peremptorily, and was filled with such contempt for one's colossal ignorance, that it made it difficult to ask him questions; and I must confess that my heart beat hard with apprehension every time I was given an order, for fear I should not do it right, and that, rebellious as I was about my own amusement, I feared Stanford on the boat as much as any little cabin boy feared "The Old Man." I snatched a fearful joy in executing orders quickly, and for the rest I shared the pleasure that only those who love sailing in small boats can ever know.

Stanford took his sailing hard. He played a game of make-believe with himself, and imagined that there was a great deal to be done on the boat. He put the time into manœuvring that a man might have needed in a forty-foot schooner, and not only did he like to play this

game himself, but he wished to make the rest of us play it. On calm days, when we would all be lying comfortably in the shadow of a big sail, Stan would begin to get restless. I think the sight of us lying there so peacefully exasperated him. He would begin by muttering: —

"Everything on the Sound 's passing us!"

"Is n't it nice to see them go by?" Morris would be exasperating enough to throw back at him.

Finally, "I can't stand it!" Stan would explode. "We don't move at all. The tops'l 's got to be hoisted."

"Oh, let the tops'l rest," Morris would implore, while Phil would grumble: —

"It won't help you," knowing all the time that it would.

The tops'l was as cranky, cross-grained a sail as ever was. Its clew-line never would run out, and all hands would have to turn to before the thing could be properly set. I think Stan enjoyed a set-to with the tops'l. He treated it as if it were a real person whose sulky nature must be overcome. But there was only one way to break it, as a rule, and that was to go shinning up the mast and untangle the clew-line.

Before the sail was doing any work, our peaceful group had been well broken up.

I had a personal enmity for that tops'l, and a well-founded one, for it had a cussedness that I have never seen equaled in a human being.

Meantime, no extravagant wife ever made more demands on her husband's pockets than did the Marianna. Now she called for a compass and again for smarter riding lights. Not content with having her decks scraped, she was always having herself hauled up and painted, complaining about that harbor mud. But she overreached herself, as so many young women of her kind had done before her, did the beautiful Marianna, for by the end of the season our purse was empty, and with bleeding hearts we realized that we should have to sell her. We have learned since that she was always an unprincipled boat, bleeding her owners. Her first owner stole her plans and money to have her built, and afterwards she was owned successively by two young men who borrowed to pay for her. She lay up for two years in City Island, when she seduced my husband and bled us to the last penny, and even then ungratefully made

us realize that we had not given her all the luxuries to which she was accustomed.

We sold her at a loss to some fresh-water yachtsman, who took her to a lake. I hope in her old age she may have found an owner well-to-do, who, if he does not love her madly as she was loved in her youth, will keep her decently, make her spars and deck bright, give her new suits of sails when she needs them, and do over her cabin, which we never could afford to touch.

I BUY THE TAR BABY

CHAPTER V

SO the mighty were fallen, and we went sorrowfully into the country the next summer without a boat.

In front of our house were a number of little craft, and among them one, we learned, was for sale. I had got over all surprise so far as Stan and boats were concerned. So I was not astonished when I heard him say to the owner, a stolid Swede:—

"She 's a centreboard boat, of course. A keel boat in these waters is no good."

"Sure she 's a centreboard. A fine boat; I sell her to you for seventy-five dollars," the owner said, and lumbered heavily away.

The fine boat was a little jib and mainsail boat, open, broad, and squat. She curtsied perpetually up and down on the water like a polite little old lady, and she was of the vintage of about 1830.

But she was a boat, and homely and slow as she was, Stan ardently desired her. It was most unfaithful of him, for she was the exact opposite

of the Marianna. After we had been two weeks by the water, his desire for smart boats vanished. What he wanted was a boat to sail in, any kind of a scow, he did n't care what, he asserted, so long as it had a tiller and a sail.

A few nights later the Swede loomed up in the dusk.

"I sell her to you for fifty," he said sullenly.

I had seen him walking with a masterful looking woman, while he pushed a baby carriage. Now, being a yachtsman's wife does more than make a woman silent and industrious; it makes her crafty and keen at a bargain.

"Does n't your wife like sailing?" I asked innocently.

"No; what for I stay behind mit der baby? she say. So she kicks. I sell der boat."

I went to see Mrs. Larsen next day.

"How much you afford to give for dat boat?" she asked.

"Thirty-five dollars," I told her.

"Larsen, he come for der money to-night," she said, and shut her mouth like a trap.

That night, sure enough, Larsen came and sullenly pocketed his thirty-five dollars. Poor man, I felt like a thief. He had spent all his

Sundays and his spare time painting and caulking the old lady and making her neat and tight. But Mrs. Larsen was not of the stuff of which yachtsmen's wives are made.

We painted the old boat black, and named her the Tar Baby, which must have shocked her very much, for I 'm sure that her first name, way back years ago, must have been Belinda or Seraphina.

We sailed in her for years, and at last gave her away, still staunch, and only a trifle leaky, to an ungrateful friend who renamed her the White Elephant. I learn that late in life she developed the bad habit of dragging her anchor, and is spending her declining years under the name Anxiety.

That summer I went off on a dangerous side-track for any yachtsman's wife — a side-track which it took years to come back from. I devoted myself to learning to sail, and I worked with the same feminine faithfulness over mastering this art that I had put the summer before into working over the Marianna. Everything favored me. A grown boy, who sailed very well, lived on our island, and Stan let him take me sailing. For the first time I found myself alone

in a boat with some one I was not afraid to ask questions of, with the tiller in my hand, and no one to grab it from me when anything interesting happened. Then, for the first time, I began to have the madness for boats on my own account. For though I had been proud of the Marianna, I had never loved her, and secretly I was jealous. Besides, I was too constantly in a state of apprehension to learn much about sailing. My part there was that of the simple man before the mast, who obeys orders, but is not expected to use judgment. And better for me, and for every one, would it have been, had I kept this humble position.

It was not altogether my own fault that I went off on this side-track. It was Stan, indeed, who put my feet on it. He seemed to want me to learn sailing, and spent a great deal of time on me. I began to learn so that I might please him. It was a natural mistake to make — you would think that your men would like you to know how to sail. They do like you to learn — and then they like you never to do it except when they want to show you off. I am sure that my old lady in the Portchester harbor knew how, and I am sure she never disturbed her husband

with her knowledge. When there was anything to be done, I can imagine her doing it in silence and adequately and inconspicuously, so that she had relapsed into her proper sphere almost before any one had had time to notice that she had ever left it.

A woman, unless she is taught sailing from her cradle, never learns to sail a boat the way a man does. The trouble is that her little knowledge raises her opinion of herself to such a height that wives will sit up and arrogantly dispute with their husbands points of seamanship as soon as they know that there is such a thing as seamanship; and any one who knows anything about the yachtsman's world knows how unbecoming it is in a woman to have opinions of her own on such subjects. But at the time this, of course, did not occur to me. I did n't know, in fact, before I sailed in the reliable little Tar Baby — which, though slow, as Phil said, as the old oaken bucket, could always be depended upon to do the same thing the same way every time — what a master passion sailing is.

There could not possibly have been a better boat to have learned sailing in, for this reliability of the Tar Baby's is as rare among boats as it

is among women and horses; in fact, a boat is much like a horse, in that the more blood it has, the greater art does managing it become. But the old Tar Baby made no pretenses, honest old boat, to blood of any kind. Instead, she made a point of performing the daily round, the trivial task, with touching faithfulness.

So there followed for me happy months. Breck and I would start out in the morning. With the tiller in my hand I could head her where I would. I could make my own little naïve experiments in sailing. The theory of sailing, of course, had been explained to me in learned orations by both Phil and Stan, and they meant as much to me as algebra to a child. Now, I learned the two and two make four of the science. Breck had n't sailed so much himself, but what he knew were the things that I wanted to know, so we would happily sail away, now skirting the Connecticut shore, nosing our way down the long harbors, and coming back in time for lunch, and then setting forth again, while old German ladies living on our island would remonstrate with us:—

"Oh, Mrs. Dayton, id vould be bedder if you vould n't go oudt to-day, mid der vind freshing. Gonsider to us der embarrassments if ve must

THE SOLICITOUS OLD GERMAN LADIES

to your husband announce der sad tidings dat you vas drownt!"

But nothing ever did happen, except that each day I learned a little more. I got to have quite a swagger about the boat. I ordered Breck around. My nonchalant "Ready about!" was a feminine replica of Stan's. I made Breck coil the ropes neatly, and in fact played at being skipper. This was week-days. Saturday afternoons and Sundays, my cocky manner was put away. Again I was the meek, docile yachtsman's wife, briskly pulling the ropes I was ordered to pull, and saying "yes" and "no" in the right places.

GUESTS

CHAPTER VI

IT would have been much better for me, I repeat, had I realized that my serious business in life was not learning to sail, but learning to manage guests; for this summer we had people with us a great deal. Looking after the details of lunch and ice is for a yachtsman's wife what the cares of her house are for the wife of a husband without fads. Though I did not realize it then, I know now that it makes very little difference to a yachtsman whether his wife ever learns to sail a boat well or not, as long as she can obey his commands with promptness and ordinary intelligence. What matters to him more than he knows is his wife's ability to deal with guests. Most people naturally hate small-boat sailing, though they imagine that they love it dearly; if one owns a boat, there is nothing more inevitable than that one will ask one's friends out over Sunday for a sail.

I do not think that it has even yet occurred to Stanford's innocent mind that he is not doing

the greatest favor in the world to these unfortunate friends whom he asks out.

There are a few people who really "like sailing," and who yet have no desire to own a boat, and no talent for learning to sail a boat themselves. Young Morris was one of these. He sailed with us for years as regularly as Phil Temple, and was never anything but unfailingly lubberly.

On the other hand, he was a perfect guest. He had a lofty disregard of the weather. He could sit in the shadow of the sail for hours, and analyze his soul. He did not care how long he was becalmed, for he had his soul always with him, and he could always speculate about Phil's or Stan's or mine if his own bored him.

Of course Phil and Stan thought he was an ass, although they were fond of him; but he was an immense comfort to me. I thought it showed, too, a great deal of individuality that he could "go sailing" so much and not know one rope from another. He never even learned to tell which way the wind was coming from, and you can imagine what contempt that exposed him to in the eyes of my two friends. Stan worked over Morris for months trying to

HE WOULD DRAW LITTLE DIAGRAMS

explain the theory of sailing. He would draw little diagrams, which Morris would study with soulful brown eyes. Afterwards he would tell me shamelessly that he had not understood a word of what Stan was saying, but that he liked to hear him talk.

Morris had quite a little to do with my breaking in, in a negative way. He kept me from being too humble-minded the first year, while I was getting, so to speak, bridle-wise. Later he was a great help with refractory guests.

The reason so many people are anxious to go out in little boats is the false idea literature gives of the pleasures of sailing. I often read luscious descriptions of bounding through the water, with delightful scenery all about, that would mislead anybody.

You imagine yourself sitting at ease, a delicious little breeze wafting you along, a lovely day, neither too hot nor too cold, and the wind with you both ways.

Now my experience is that when sailing in a little boat like the Tar Baby there is always too much something for somebody. It is very apt to fall a flat calm in the Sound warm Sunday afternoons. It is also apt to breeze up fresh,

and over goes your little boat on her ear, and the whole company has to sit up to windward, shifting themselves like a lot of ballast when one comes about.

Stan loved to take his friends out in what he called a "fine sailing breeze." This meant that his guests would be drenched, as the Tar Baby squattered along when there were any waves, sending back showers of spray over her fat little chest. She made so much fuss getting through the water that she gave the impression of going along at a great speed, and Stan humored her in this, keeping her away from other boats that would have slipped past her with hardly a ripple. He would hold the tiller with a beaming face, saying kindly things about the poor old boat which was so eager and willing that she would have touched a harder heart than her owner's.

Meantime, our friends would be having an impromptu shower bath, and people dressed in speckless yachting clothes do not always enjoy such things. Stan himself in the stern of the boat would be nice and dry, and Phil would try to remain so. He hated getting wet when he was dressed in anything but a bathing-suit, and

said so frankly. Now he would perch like a seagull on the traveler; again he would alight on the centreboard trunk; or he would improvise a seat with the crotch. The other occupants of the boat would have to sit quietly where they were put, or hear from Stan.

Politeness ordered that I should sit in the most exposed place on the boat — politeness and policy both, for while a seasoned yachtsman like Phil may say he hates getting wet, a yachtsman's wife may not; if she does, it shows at once that she is not made of the right kind of stuff for a yachtsman's wife. She must sit quiet while buckets of water pour down her backbone. She must not notice that there is any water pouring down, or if she does notice it, then let it be with a pleasant smile of enjoyment, thus giving the cue to the other people in the boat, who try to smile too, as the wind bites keenly through their drenched garments.

Sometimes it happened that a rebellious guest tried to find a more sheltered spot and moved to the stern of the boat.

"I beg your pardon," Stan would say in his best manner, "but would you mind getting off the main sheet?"

A moment later it would be: "I 'm so sorry to trouble you again — but — *could* you move a little? I 've got to fix the jib sheet — you 're sitting on it."

It 's easy to say "move" on a little boat like the Tar Baby. The question is, where? The guest would then settle down uncomfortably on the narrow centreboard trunk. In a few minutes we should be sure to shift our course, and Phil would ask gently: —

"Would you mind sitting over there? I 've got to hoist the centreboard."

"There" would mean the wet seat that the unfortunate guest had occupied first. On days like this, there are not many places on a boat to sit except on the main sheet or some other place that seems unsuitable to the man sailing the boat. What with dodging the boom, and getting soaked, and sitting in unwonted and uncomfortable positions, or else broiling for long hours under a pitiless sun miles away from home and supper, I am sure I don't see what pleasure there can be for people in a casual sail.

There is no such thing as liking just a part of sailing; one must like it all, take it as it comes, and above all have a great amount of

patience, and no love of getting back to meals on time.

The people who like to sail only under happy circumstances would do well to stay at home. Days of perfection are so few. Yet it is usually just such people who come out of town expecting to have a good time. I have witnessed trying and pathetic sights among our poor guests. I have seen girls — yes, and men, too — grip the seat with tight, nervous fingers as puff after puff knocked us down. It has come to the point when we have had to put them ashore, though this has happened only once or twice.

On Saturdays and Sundays, of course, I came down from my high place as skipper, and took up my proper rôle of hostess, though with inward grumblings. For the love of sailing had gripped my heart, and I wanted to be amusing myself sailing my own boat, as any man would, instead of studying my guests and mitigating their discomforts as best I might. But I swung so far out of my proper sphere that when there were no women aboard I would actually enjoy the things that happened to our guests, saying to myself, "Well, it serves him right — why did he come?"

I remember one sail especially. It was the day when Stan proved to Phil that the Tar Baby was quick in stays by running before the wind smack up against one after another of those treacherous green rocks off Portchester shore, and then suddenly coming about, grazing both bowsprit and stern. They paid no attention to our poor guest, proceeding with this childish sport half the afternoon. Only Morris and I noticed how nervous he was, and Morris soothed him by saying: —

"Sooner or later, you know, they 'll fetch this rock. You can't swim, can you, Jones? Well, we 'll have to get you out an oar to hang on to."

Or, "Did you feel her scrape that time? She 's a rather old boat, and ready to come to pieces any minute."

Poor Jones, who was a pleasant fellow, had his love of sailing taken away from him for good on that afternoon, and it ought to have been my duty to divert the sufferer as best I could. Instead of this, I learned all I could about sailing by watching the way Phil and Stan ran the boat.

There were other times when girls got very scared, and were ashamed to own up, when I had to make myself unpopular with the men by

insisting on going home. I learned to recognize seasickness in its earliest moments, and made some excuse for a landing.

The hardest thing of all is to keep up the courage and spirits of a party in the face of a flat calm. The sun beats down on you pitilessly. The skin of the girls' noses slowly burns to a crisp and at last peels off. A painful magenta streak divides the neck just above the collar. There is nothing on earth to do but sit still, and after a while you get so talked out that you feel that never, so long as you live, will you have anything to say to one another again. You get sung out, too. And after that there remains hopeless boredom, deadly patience. That is what happens when you are becalmed, if the hostess has not her wits about her. There are some people, do what one may, who cannot live through a calm without agony.

A calm is so antagonistic anyway to the American temperament that it is very little short of cruelty to ask untried people to go on the water when there is the least sign of a dropping wind. Bored, seasick, frightened, nervous, uncomfortable — when one asks people sailing, one runs the risk of making them any of these things.

As I am one of those people who must suffer vicariously the things that people are suffering about me, of course I did not altogether shirk my duty of hostess. I repeat, I should have made this the aim and object of my life, instead of trying to handle a boat. To show you how I side-tracked myself in my business of being a yachtsman's wife, I will tell you a story which shows it better than any mere assertion of the fact.

THE VALUE OF THE USUAL

CHAPTER VII

WHEN I was a very young girl, and inclined, like most young people, to despise the beautiful commonplace things of daily life, and to find the path of the usual a dull place for my walks abroad, an old lady said to me: —

"My dear, do not underrate the value of the usual; its highway is a convenient road which leads one to a freedom of spirit; for blazing one's own path through life is wasting one's time on hard work when we might better have made use of the labor of others."

And, indeed, I have found the path of the usual like a well-trodden road, perhaps not as interesting as cross-country traveling, but still a saver of time and trouble, and if on its even surface one has not so much joy of adventure, neither does one bark one's shins or tear one's clothes in scrambling over fences.

It is, for instance, so much against the usual for a woman to sail a boat as to seem almost against nature, and so I say again, no yachts-

man's wife should learn to sail; for no grown woman can learn to handle a boat and not be puffed up with pride.

When Stan and I were first married, I felt my way around among the conventions of his yachtsman's world awkwardly. It was a long time before I learned enough so that, metaphorically speaking, I no longer ate with my knife; and though I learned to know the yachtsman's conventions by sight, they formed no part of me; rather did they seem like the meaningless etiquette of some outlandish people. However, all the lubberly mistakes I made were not, I now realize, so great a mistake as my learning to sail; for now I am in an independent position — a woman with a bank account of her own, as it were. But while a woman may have a bank account and an humble spirit at the same time, there is no such thing as sailing a boat meekly, for the very moment one is captain of only a sneak-box, one becomes as arrogant and intolerant of advice as the Old Man of any smart old-time clipper.

One may sin against the usual in a myriad other ways than the one that I followed in leaving my "woman's sphere" — which on a

boat is keeping one's mouth closed and seeing after the lunch: one may, for instance, like young Morris, be constantly fishing in the depths of one's being for rare emotions, and, lacking these, one may sit off by one's self and take one's mind to pieces like a watch and fit it together again. Played alone, this is as harmless a game as solitaire, but when two play at it, it becomes a dangerous game of chance.

And to show that all this is true, I will tell the story of two sails; and you will see how much better off we should all have been had every one of us followed the comfortable path of every day.

This story begins with Morris and Alison James, Phil Temple, Stan, and myself starting forth for a day of sailing. It was I who was taking the boat out. We floated down the endless harbor, borne rather by the ebbing tide than the little breath of wind, toward the shining Sound, where white-sailed boats glided along like stately birds. Farther out toward the Long Island shore, sails were bending to stray breaths of wind, which here and there disturbed the shining blue mirror.

Stanford at last broke the silence which held us all with :—

"If you hold on that way much longer, you 'll have us all up on the mud!"

I tranquilly held my boat on its course — it was I who was sailing it.

"Did you hear what I say?" asked Stan, and there was a note of just anger in his voice.

"Yes," I replied tranquilly and without defiance, "I heard you." And I continued on my course with composure. One learns during a number of years of married life how to avoid annoying one's husband — one also learns how best to annoy him.

"Suit yourself," came from Stan ; and it was wonderful what a threat he made of his simple words — weeks of lying on the mud were in them.

Outwardly unmoved, but with my heart beating a trifle faster, I continued my course toward the shallow water which hid the mud banks, concealing unplumbed depths of obstinacy under a restful, peaceful manner — in fact, quite overdoing it, and in the end seeming hardly conscious of the tiller in my hand. But my indifference was a defiance, my tranquillity a challenge.

It was, you see, a breach of family etiquette

for Stan to interfere with me; had he been at the tiller, he might have deliberately wrecked the boat without my opening my mouth, so well am I drilled.

Stanford elaborately ignored me and my sailing. "Hang us up on the mud, for all I care," his attitude told me. At last, "Ready about," says I, in a languid, indifferent tone, as if I had n't judged the distance of the bank to an inch. The little boat turned on its heel, the rudder scraped the mud, leaving a turgid yellow streak on the blue water. I allowed myself no triumph. I merely continued to zigzag the endless harbor, giving the mud bank a kick on each tack, sitting aloof and superb at my tiller.

I tell this incident only to show the danger of a wife's learning to sail, and how exasperating, headstrong, and self-confident this perilous knowledge makes a woman. I tell it, too, because what young Morris said about it so well illustrates his attitude toward us.

He turned to Alison James with: —

"Are n't they as heavenly as I said they were? Is n't it a pity that we can't in decency call in a writer and have him put them in a book?" At which Alison turned her long, narrow eyes to

Morris, nodding comprehendingly. So Morris, by his question and Alison's mute answer, had turned himself into a spectator and us into a show. Phil Temple bristled like a turkey gobbler.

"Oh, don't mind the decencies," he sputtered. "Call in your writer. You can't make us any more notorious than we are, sailing in this freak boat. Was n't it ugly enough without painting it to look like a poster? I feel as if I were sailing in an advertisement for a breakfast food!"

It was an open boat, and its lines were as graceful as those of a washtub, which in many respects it resembled; it was as high-sided as one, and was prevented from being as circular mainly by a snubby bowsprit, on the one hand, and an enormous rudder, on the other. This rudder was so out of proportion, and was shipped so high, that the boat's name, which was painted in large yellow letters, was cut in two, with the result that on one side of the rudder one read VASE, and on the other, LINE. The boat was only sixteen feet over all, and had a jib and mainsail of a mellow golden hue such as one seldom sees this side of the Mediterranean; it was wonderfully conspicuous among the flock

of white-sailed yachts which flit over the Sound. This conspicuous canvas was only Stan's way of letting the whole Sound know that if he had to sail in a boat of so antiquated a model, it was just as a joke. As a matter of fact, we had come home from Italy, as others have, poor, and it was for us the Vaseline or nothing.

So the poor old craft, which had sedately bobbed up and down at her moorings week-days and gone on fishing excursions Sundays quite as sedately (as if, indeed, these excursions were a sort of sailboat's church), for a matter of over thirty years, had been done over in this extraordinary fashion.

She had been a boat much cherished by her simple-hearted owners, not one of whom had had the heart to change the name which had been given to her in her youth; for when we found her, BEA was painted on one side of the stern, and UTY on the other.

Old boats as well as old houses have each one its peculiar atmosphere, and Beauty spoke eloquently of the simpler yachting manners of an earlier day. She had artless tales to tell me of long fishing parties where one really caught fish, of jolly family sailing parties where one

carried huge lunch baskets bursting with homely, substantial food. In short, she was as honest, simple, elderly a boat as ever you saw. There was something as indecent in snatching her out of the obscurity of her little, unfrequented cove on the Connecticut shore, as there would be in pulling an old lady out of her rocker on her back piazza and setting her pirouetting in a circus ring.

Not a shade of Phil's disapproval escaped the analytical eye of Morris. The whole morning had seemed to his perverse sense of humor a delicious comedy. Stanford and I and our boats have always seemed to Morris, as he said to Alison James, "heavenly," and in all the many years he has sailed with us he has never had any one with whom he could share his esoteric chuckles. Now he looked over to Alison for a responsive gleam, but Alison was talking to me with her pretty volubility. She was saying: —

"I think it was such a picturesque idea. I've always loved boats with bright-colored sails — in pictures, I mean; I never saw one! And the name is so quaint: the Vaseline! How did you happen to think of that name, Mrs. Dayton?"

"It came to me," I replied, turning a mali-

cious eye on Morris. Very well I knew that Morris had brought Alison James that he might experience the subtle joys of watching the effect we produced on her. He had not bargained for the effect that she might produce on us. He had wanted Alison to share with him his secret knowledge of how droll we are; and now, as the wind freshened and we slipped evenly along, she burst out in exultation over the joys of sailing; her words tumbled over each other in soft eagerness. She gave the impression of bridging over some conversational gap, of trying in the face of difficulties to put every one at ease; and Morris, who thought he made "insight" a profession, had not the keenness to see that it was herself whom Alison was trying to put at ease.

I for one was sorry for her — and it is no new thing for me to feel sorry for my guests. There she was, dumped down with a hostess who, puffed up with pride, ostentatiously sailed the boat; then there was Morris, who expected of her some wonderful appreciation, but what, she did n't exactly know. So, obscurely aware that she had missed the right "tone" — and how particular Morris was about tone — she continued to give out appreciations of the Sound. She did it

charmingly, being one of the few women to whom superlatives are becoming.

Morris looked at her with sternness. This was not the way he had expected her to take sailing with us.

"Let's go out in front of the mast, Alison," he suggested.

Poor Alison's gayety died. The bubbling flow of her enthusiasm subsided like a dying geyser, but as she stepped to the other side of the sail:—

"You are quick with your blame," said she to Morris, and reproach and pride were in her dark eyes. She was the type of girl that makes other women seem colorless; but he was n't to be softened by any mere prettiness,— what he demanded was "insight;" and I heard him reply in his soft voice:—

"I have said nothing," thus metaphorically shutting the door in Alison's face. And I hastily changed the course of the boat, putting the sail between us and them.

On our side of the sail all was not harmony, nor did our lack of what Morris calls "oneness" express itself in subtleties.

Phil had preserved his gloom intact in spite of the lovely day, and he now opened fire on

Stan by remarking, in his honest, outspoken way: —

"Do you know what this boat of yours makes me think of? It makes me think of a piece of antique furniture enameled white, with the claws gilded. The matter with you is, you 've lost your standards. You 're too impressionable. Gad! I ought to be glad you did n't come back wearing a beret and a mile of red sash around your stomach."

"I don't see what there is so wrong about this boat." A first faint note of uneasiness showed itself in Stan's voice.

"I like its looks," said I; "and I don't see, if one wants to, why one should n't paint the mast of one's own boat like a barber's pole."

"I suppose you don't," Phil answered wearily, looking across at Stan, who returned his look. It was evident to me that I had somehow been "just like a girl" again, and again, as often before, the sense of the inferiority of women brought together the two old friends.

There is nothing more treacherous than a little boat for giving away secrets. On one tack the people forward are shut away from their companions as if by a partition; then let the

boat come about, and a whispering gallery is a better place for confidences. So, from time to time, Alison's voice would be wafted to me — and I could no more help hearing than if she had been seated next me. So I caught things like: —

"I suppose this is one of the phases we must all go through. We must be patient with each other;" or, "After all, what we call 'engagements' are the results of such an artificial condition that they naturally conduce to the hypercritical state of mind you and I find ourselves in;" and again, "It 's uncomfortable, but it 's interesting. Oh, how all this should make us understand!"

Then Morris: "You 've missed the whole point, my dear girl — forgive me if I say you *don't* understand." His voice came to me cool and superior, as superior as the voice of a husband teaching one to sail. After all, "insight" and "understanding" and the game of analysis were the boats of Alison and Morris — a game which they played with the deadly seriousness of children, just as Stan and I play at sailing; the games one plays in this whole-souled fashion often seem to one more important than the real business of life. Quarreling over such games

makes very little difference after one is married, though before, it often leads to trouble; and I wished that I had a church and a parson handy, and could take Alison and Morris and marry them off, and let them play the game of buying the furniture for their house, and then afterwards let them up and analyze each other's souls, and welcome.

We had got well to the middle of the Sound when the wind treacherously forsook us, the boat slid along like some gayly painted beetle, slowly, and more slowly, and at last the mainsail gave a discouraged flap, as if to say, "I can do no more," and Alison's voice came clearly to the cockpit:—

"The question to me is, if we really cared, would we, do you think, pick It to pieces this way? Do you think if we *felt*, really felt, we could *talk* so much?"

Then the idle boom swung, creaking mournfully, to some little swell, and disclosed Morris, his head in his hands.

"I don't know, Alison," he said; "I don't know."

It was evident that Tragedy was passing over. I might as reasonably have asked Stan, in our

early days, whether, if he really cared for me, he would have sailed so much; but people always give speech undue importance, and refuse to realize that certain kinds of conversations are to be classed with golf, or chess, or any other absorbing but insignificant pastime. However, I tried to drown Alison out by chaffing Phil Temple, but her voice had a thrilling quality which rose above our chatter when the poor child wailed: —

"It's *you* who can't feel! It's you who've killed It for me. You've analyzed It to death; you've talked It to death!" —and I could stand it no longer, and called my two guests away from their tragic sport.

The difference between men and women in such matters is that men know deep down in their hearts that a game is a game, while women don't. So Morris, having played his game, ignored it, which to poor Alison proved his heartlessness.

Meanwhile the day grew hotter and more hot; the waters gave back the reflection of the sun like a piece of polished metal, and still not a breath of wind; the Sound was dotted with the white sails of motionless boats.

There are some people whose worst natures are brought forth by the idle waiting in an idle boat. There are others whose impatience brings them to the verge of suicide. A day of calm in a small boat on a hot day can break up friendships; and people who are not congenial become homicidal when they are shut up together in so confined a space, with nothing to take their minds from one another's defects.

In this case it was Alison who suffered, and I who suffered vicariously through her. Poor child! there was no way of getting from us, no chance of a solitude where she could luxuriously nurse her disillusionment, which was, of course, what she wanted to do, as was only natural and right for one of her age and condition. At last she asked: —

"How much longer do you think it will be, Mr. Temple, before the wind comes up?" which brought a swift glance of displeasure from Morris, for this is one of the questions that no woman may ask when sailing; and I was glad enough of a diversion, though it caused discomfort to Stan.

From all parts of the Sound, on a Sunday afternoon, you may hear the throbbing of motor

boats. When there is a calm, there are more motors than ever. They love to run up and down, past the becalmed yachts, puff-puffing and chug-chugging insolently, to call attention to the fact that *they* are not becalmed; they prattle with noisy insistence to the still, bored boats, of a motor's independence of wind and tide. On the whole, I know of no more offensive being than a motor boat in a flat calm.

I had noticed that a number of launches had passed near us, but as they were polite, well-bred private boats, I did not realize, until one went out of its course, made toward us, and off again, that our yellow sail had aroused the curiosity of the Sound. But this was not the end. For a long time I had been aware of a snorting and panting, of a sobbing and groaning, as of a boat in great pain, for the noise of a motor carries a great distance. Then I located the noise; the snorts grew louder, and there bore down on us a motor boat the like of which I never saw. It was a degraded old hulk of a low-lived fishing boat; its motor towered up shapeless and uncouth, and from what looked like the discarded stovepipe of a kitchen stove there was vomited forth smoke; as the thing ran toward us, we

A MOTOR BOAT THE LIKE OF WHICH I NEVER SAW

watched it silently, until Phil Temple said, with conviction:—

"The owner's mother made that in a bad dream. She made it of tin cans."

Aboard this indecent craft were a half-dozen men; one trailed his feet, boots and all, in the water. They were all drunk, as one must needs be to trust one's self to such a nightmare motor, which shrieked and sobbed to the whole Sound that its end was near.

Yet it was from this boat that we were to learn what the Sound thought of us, and what it thought was not complimentary. It was conveyed to us by the medium of derisive whoops and yells, as the home-made motor boat circled around us, panting and strangling, getting ready for the final snort which should burst her tank, and send the dishonored hulk and all aboard to the bottom of the Sound.

We had sinned against the law of the usual; and in the yachting world there is no greater crime: for the world of boats, the world over, permits no unconventionality, and the same spirit which forbids centreboards to the boats of the mistral-swept Mediterranean, because there have never been centreboards there, also forbids

orange sails on the Sound for the same reason; and I was heartily glad when the wind at last arose and took us home, away from a critical and inquisitive world. Phil Temple and Morris were as merry as crickets, but as we alighted at the wharf, and the setting sun turned Alison James's scorched face an even deeper crimson, Morris regarded his one-time fiancée with anxiety.

"Poor child," said he, "you're shockingly burned. I'm afraid your nose will peel, Alison. Let me see your hands; why, they're all purple and swollen!"

Thus may even a man with insight say a hopelessly wrong thing.

Alison led the way, throwing over her shoulder to Morris, — and she ignored his last remark, — "We may as well look the situation in the face — I don't believe in half measures." And that Morris replied, "What situation?" showed Alison how light-minded he was.

THE BOAT AND THE BABY CARRIAGE

CHAPTER VIII

BETWEEN the first and second cruise of the Vaseline, there was an interval of two weeks. Stan and I were preoccupied, for Stan had a boat on his hands in which nothing would have induced him to sail, while my conscience was burdened with a broken engagement; for Morris had been made to understand that there *was* a situation. When he saw that Alison had thrown him over, and for no good reason that he could see, he became touchingly miserable, and finally blurted out at me, like any ordinary boy, a despairing: —

"Oh, I don't understand girls, anyway;" which was for Morris an immense come-down. What made the situation poignant was that Alison told me she could never marry any one who did not understand her, which was only her way of saying that she would not stand Morris giving himself the airs of a superior male being. I do not blame any unmarried girl for feeling this way. Such actions are unnatural

and unfitting for all men but brothers and husbands. She showed plenty of spirit, too, for she refused to see Morris alone. He wanted "to explain," he said, while Alison said there was nothing to explain; and so for two weeks I served as a medium of communication between them, being as it were a species of human telephone.

During these two weeks you will please fancy Stanford sneaking off to a little deserted boat-yard every spare moment he had, where he, with his own hands, slapped three coats of white paint upon the fat black sides of the Vaseline, and painted out her name.

When a little fat white boat, with no name and white sails, gracefully and modestly bobbed and curtsied at the mooring where the bedizened Vaseline had formerly lain, I professed myself not only pleased, but surprised. I like to tell this. I do not want you to think that I am always tactless and arrogant, especially as what I now have to relate shows how far out of perspective one may get if one quits the paths of every day; for if I had not learned to sail a boat, I am sure that I never should have proposed sailing to a place we had lived in two

summers before, to collect certain articles that we had stored there in a barn.

"A baby carriage might be a very uncomfortable thing in a boat," Stan objected, "if there was any wind at all. Besides, it will look so queer."

"The Vaseline," I told him, "is so fat and high-sided that no one will notice it, anyway."

Of course, I see now how preposterous it was, but like most preposterous things, it seemed at the moment not only reasonable, but thrifty. I was quite proud of myself for thinking of it.

I felt more vainglorious than any old skipper when we started off on the second cruise of the Vaseline, for not only was I going to have my own way, but also I was doing a kindness to others; I took Alison along to get her mind off her unengaged state, which by this time was beginning to depress her. As we bore down on the wharf, I saw young Morris, arrayed in conspicuously white clothes. Stan remarked in tones too off-hand to be natural: —

"Morris was lunching over here, and I told him we'd pick him up." It is not women only

who hasten along the hands of the matrimonial clock.

Together we set forth after the baby carriage. In the dusk of the barn it loomed larger than I thought a baby carriage could. It was covered with thick dust, as were the fly-screens, the two pails, and the box I had not told Stan about. Spiders had found it an alluring place for the weaving of heavy webs; the hammock also was degraded, noisome, mildewed.

"See here, Meg," Stanford began sternly, "the Vaseline, after all, is n't a moving-van."

But a rage for those things possessed me; they were mine, and I needed them.

"How else," I argued, "shall we get them home? I could buy them for what it would cost to cart them."

Like a man, "Buy others," he suggested.

"Buy others," I shrilled, "when I have already perfectly good ones?" By sheer force of will and obstinacy, such as the best of wives sometimes show, I overcame his better judgment. I had come for that baby carriage, for those fly-screens, those two pails, and the hammock, and even though old, dirty, and mildewed, they were mine, and I wanted them. I could not bear to go away

and leave them; I had to have them, and, more than anything, I wanted my own way.

And poor Stan realized, as every husband from the first husband of all has realized, first or last, that this was a moment when the obstinacy of woman is a dynamic force; and with grumbling and muttering he gave way before it.

He seized the baby carriage and the hammock. Phil followed with the two fly-screens; he held the dirty things far from him protestingly. Morris took to his white bosom the box, while Alison possessed herself of the pails. I, the skipper of the Vaseline, followed this procession self-satisfied, clean, and unburdened.

At the present time I agree with Stan that a small boat is no place for a perambulator, nor for fly-screens, for that matter, and I began to agree with him the moment we were in the boat. Unaccountably that baby carriage seemed to have grown in size by the time we got it aboard. It took up all the room there was, and the fly-screens took up the rest. Morris, with a smile of perfect content, helped Alison in, and she smiled back at him. This time Morris had no need to ask Alison if we were not "heavenly;" she could see for herself, we were being heavenly

with a vengeance. We arranged ourselves in the space left by my belongings; as we got under way, a rude little boy in a sneak-box jeered at us. I found that it made a great deal of difference to my skippership whose fault it was that the Vaseline was jeered. The wind had shifted and freshened; the little boat lay far over on her fat side, and little choppy waves came "plop" against her fat bosom, at which she would stop indignantly, like a plump old lady who is splashed by a cable car.

Meanwhile the baby carriage changed from an inanimate to an animate object. It charged down on Stan's shins; it made frantic dashes at the centreboard trunk. We hung on to it, but it got away from us. Not one of us but had a tussle with it. Boats which passed near us derided our struggles.

Finally Stan growled, "Hang on to this infernal machine, Margery, will you? You know more about such things than I do."

Silently I relinquished the tiller, and applied myself to the pacification of the ramping perambulator. I was no longer the skipper of the Vaseline. I was Stanford Dayton's wife, who had for a moment forgotten the old adage that

I THE SKIPPER FOLLOWED THE PROCESSION

there is a place for everything and that everything should be in its place; who for a moment had strayed from the beaten paths, and who was now being punished for it corporeally by an indignant baby carriage. I had brought about an unnatural meeting, and was reaping the fruits of it by knocks and bruises — it is well to keep boats and baby carriages apart in this world. Meantime Morris made gentle, ineffectual efforts to pacify the fly-screens. Soon he arose, and said with decision: "Alison, come with me, this is no place for us;" and as they made their way to the damp deck forward, he turned and waved a graceful adieu to the screens.

"Good-by, my friends," he said to them; "I leave you in possession of the field." And I realized as never before just what it was about Morris that on occasion so irritated Stan and Phil.

Phil meantime sat apart, courteous and aloof. He could not join with his usual friendly fashion in this family quarrel, he could only feign indifference; when the baby carriage rapped him smartly, he grew almost apologetic, as if by moving his legs out of the way he admitted that there was a baby carriage, and thus intruded unduly on our domestic affairs.

It was at this moment that I began to understand the meaning of the yachtsman's etiquette. When other boats smiled derisively at our abominable freight, I realized why moorings should be picked up in a certain way ; why it is essential that ropes should be coiled in such and such a manner ; for etiquette is merely the usual formalized, the ritual of the easiest way. And in abiding by the many rules that custom lays down for us, one attains, as my old friend said, a freedom of spirit ; one also avoids making one's self ridiculous. I confessed that a boat is no place for a baby carriage, and that, the world over, a man should be skipper of his craft.

But I was not the only penitent. As I clung with aching arms to the burden I had laid on us all, and as we turned into our harbor, the shifting sail disclosed Alison and Morris on the wet deck. They held one another's hands, and there was nothing cryptic in the way Morris cried to us joyously : —

" We're engaged again ! I've explained everything to Alison — I 've explained that I was wrong from the first."

I wish I might leave the second cruise of the Vaseline at this point, for what followed is one

of the dark moments of my sailing. Had I been the one to be punished, and could I have sat out with them on the mud for four hours, I think I should not feel it so much in retrospect. Four hours on the mud-flats, with Phil and Stan and the baby carriage and the fly-screens and the boxes, and with nothing to eat or drink, I think ought to have been an expiation for my headstrong actions. They would not have been pleasant company for me under the circumstances, and I should have had the punishment which I deserved. We zigzagged up our long harbor with Stan at the tiller and me holding on to the now somewhat pacified baby carriage, Stan muttering: —

"It's lucky it's getting dark! Now perhaps we can get that baby carriage ashore without any one seeing it;" and Phil answering: "It'll be a good job if we do."

I realized the enormity of my actions. It was thrown into still brighter relief by the contented happiness of Morris and Alison James. They did n't care how long we stayed out; they did n't care how high we were piled with baby carriages. Nothing mattered to them; the world was swept clear of any disagreeable thing.

We three sat there in the stern of the boat, silent except for the occasional discontented mutterings of the two men, and the occasional squeak of the carriage wheels, which would not, even in the dusk, let us forget its obnoxious presence. We were within twenty minutes of home when there was a dull shock, the shock of a centreboard when it meets a soft and sticky mud-bank.

"We 've hit the mud!" Phil announced superfluously. "Get the oars, Stan, and shove her off! I 'll lift the board."

But the board was glued fast, and the baby carriage was on top of the oars. The precious seconds that might have set us free passed, and although I pulled at the centreboard and the men pushed on the oars, the boat was hopelessly fast — fast on a mud-flat with an ebbing tide. Four hours at least in that boat, with its freight, four hours from now to supper!

As I say, if I could have spent it with them, I should have felt that I had paid my just penalty; but even this was not to be, for a homing fisherman came rowing up to us.

"Can't I take the ladies up to the dock?" he said. "Can, just as well as not — glad to do it.

You 're fast there for a good long while," he rubbed it in, with a cheerfulness that jarred on all our nerves.

"Go on, Meg," said Stan shortly ; and of all the merited reproofs that I have received from my husband, those words will echo longest in my repentant heart.

I climbed into the fisherman's boat, and Alison and Morris followed, and we three rowed home to a hot, pleasant supper. The people in the house received with unbecoming hilarity the news that our men were on the mud-flats. There was no way of sending them food, of course, as the ebbing tide had left many feet of sticky mud between them and the channel.

When, several hours later, they arrived at the landing, all their friends turned jovially out to meet them.

"You 're here!" they cried.

"Yes," said Stan dourly, "we 're here."

"What 's that?" I heard some one in the crowd say. By the flickering light of the lantern I saw what it was that my husband was holding high above his head.

It was the baby carriage.

"Take that thing ashore!" said he. Willing

hands stretched forward; mirthful voices asked, "What the deuce is it?" Others answered, "A baby carriage, by Jove! Did you find it on the mud flat?"

Stan replied nothing, but passed up the fly-screens.

"A fine day's fishing you had," they thought it humorous to say. "Worth sitting on the mud-flats four hours, a haul like that! Did you pry 'em out of the mud?"

To all of which the two yachtsmen, Phil and Stan, did not make answer; and Morris, now in the best of spirits, introduced the baby carriage and the fly-screens by name to the assembled company, so that no touch of humiliation should be lost to me. I heard him describe in detail how the baby carriage had behaved on the homeward sail. Gladly would I have had them all left behind on the mud-flats, could I have escaped this.

So you see what may happen to a woman if she becomes arrogant over her fancied knowledge of sailing.

Neither is it good for a man to believe that all knowledge of seamanship is his, as our adventures on the Mediterranean shore will show.

Stan learned some things there that he had never known before. Indeed, had Saucisse and Giuseppe had a hand at him before ever he had been married, my breaking in would have been gentler.

THE LURE OF JE L'AIMAIS

CHAPTER IX

AS I look back over the years I have been married, one of the most definite things in the harbor of my memory is a little fleet of boats. These are the boats which have belonged to us. They are not an imposing lot, nor are there very many of them. Most people would see only a collection of little sloops and jib-and-mainsail boats, some indifferently smart, and some old, tubby affairs, which, for all the paint and new cordage which we put on them, could make no pretense to smartness at all. You would not find among them all a boat of a new model, or even a brand-new suit of sails. But I can see in this brood of ugly ducklings all sorts of perfections. There is not one of them all that was not ready and willing and faithful; not one of them that played us an ugly trick; nor was there one on which I had not spent hours of loving care, trying to give her a semblance of smartness even in her old age.

There is another shadowy fleet of boats in

my mind : the boats we coveted and imagined ourselves buying. They make a large, imposing fleet, their lines are perfect, and their well-fitting sails spotless. Among them are schooners, and forty-foot yawls — and even steam yachts ; but I doubt if I should have loved one of them as much as I loved the boats we have actually owned, and upon which Stan and I have spent so many hours of well-meant and bungling labor.

There is a third fleet of boats that I sometimes wonder over : it is the fleet of our narrow escapes ; it is composed of boats we came near buying. Some are boats far beyond our means, handsome creatures, which all but lured us from the paths of virtuous moderation ; most of them, though, are jovial, disreputable old craft, which beckoned to Stan and me with crazy masts, crying to us that we were boatless and that they were to be bought cheap. I have adventurous moments when I wish I knew what would have happened had our hands not been stayed by some lingering bit of New England common sense. Should we all have been drowned by now, I wonder, if we had bought the Je l'Aimais, or should we have had a beautiful time and all

sorts of picturesque adventures sailing down the Mediterranean coast?

At the time, I did n't at all want to buy her, and I 'm rather proud of the way I acted in the matter; that is why I tell this story. No woman ever thoroughly learns the lesson of not plucking at the sleeve of Fate and begging it to turn this way and that way, and so when by chance one of us sits as impassive under trial as Fate itself, no wonder we remember it; no wonder we like to record it.

To make it come home to you more vividly, I must ask you to imagine yourself traveling in Europe — traveling with a nurse and baby — and then fancy your husband seriously considering the possible purchase of a menagerie of decrepit and unsalable animals, or an inaccessible and ruined house; and then, if you managed to hold your tongue and let nature take its course, see if you would n't feel proud of your self-control.

As a yachtsman's wife, I have been guilty of lubberly acts enough, and so, when I do anything tactful and wise, it gives me pleasure to recall it.

I stood at my window, which overlooked the

beach of Saint Raphaël, and as I watched the pleasant, bustling scene, I observed, dressed in a sweater and a tam-o'-shanter, with an ignoble pair of old trousers on his legs, my husband — not different, as far as my impartial eye could see, either in manner or costume, from any other of the loafers on the beach ; the only thing that marked him a foreigner was that they gesticulated extravagantly, while he did not.

He was the centre of a small group of fishermen, who were evidently trying to prove something to him, for they pointed frequently to a boat near which they stood. It needed no second sight to tell me what was afoot.

"Aha!" thought I, "they 're trying to sell that prehistoric relic to Stan — and they will!" I hastily put on my hat and joined my husband, although I knew well enough that my presence could have no restraining influence on him once he was in the grip of his master passion. Unfortunately, women have a desire fatal to their own comfort and peace of mind — they want to know the worst. I arrived in time to see Stan looking over a boat with a critical eye. He is a very good judge of boats when he is n't buying one, but Stan in a boatless condition

would be capable of buying a bird's-nest to sail in.

In a sober mood, I think he would have considered a good, stout bird's-nest more seaworthy than the venerable craft that was under consideration. I have n't been a yachtsman's wife so many years for nothing, and I knew that Stan was indulging in no academic pastime in dickering over a boat; I knew that he seriously considered buying that aged craft, with its rotten planks and all. I shall always feel that I deserved praise for not asking him the simple question with what monies he purposed to buy that museum relic from the shores of the Mediterranean, or that I did n't point out to him that our stay in Saint Raphaël was to be of but three weeks' duration; instead, I am proud to say that for once I held my tongue, and even looked as enthusiastic as human nature could be expected to.

The Je l'Aimais was, as far as my small historical knowledge goes, a bastard model of those with which Cæsar explored this same coast some two thousand years before. She was about thirty feet long, and heavy, without centreboard or keel. Her short and slender mast was out of all proportion to her heavy lines. Like the other

fishing boats she had a lateen sail, which means that on the mast was casually fixed a hook; and by means of this hook and a ring the sail was naïvely fastened.

The boat showed signs of long disuse. Any one could see at a glance that even among other boats of her type, she was peculiarly unseaworthy, for she wore the unmistakably discouraged air of a boat which has searched for years in vain for a new owner. Boats that have no loving owner have always seemed to me like dogs in the same plight. Lack of care, the absence of fresh paint, gives them the same lonely and dejected look that one observes in a lost dog. It takes no experienced eye to tell whether a boat has passed from the hands of a careful proprietor, who has been proud of her, or has "lain up," neglected, for season after season. The Je l'Aimais was of the latter type.

According, however, to the florid gentleman in the worn red tam-o'-shanter, the Je l'Aimais was a pearl among pearls, a boat of boats — a real bargain. Yes, she had lain up, it is true, a season or two; it may be three or four; it may be five or six; but only because her owner lived down Antibes way. Just why he had n't had her

put in the water and sailed down to Antibes was patent even to the dull eye of a female, for this venerable Noah's ark was only one step from the time when a boat is broken up for her iron and such of her fittings as may yet prove serviceable for another season on a more fortunate craft.

She had one virtue, however. She could be bought very cheap; to that every one agreed, with wise nods and head-shakings.

Stan looked her over with an air of criticism which I don't believe deceived any of the honest fishermen surrounding him. That he was an "Englishman" proved to their simple minds that he was mad to start with; that he had considered this boat at all must have proved to them that he had only recently escaped from his keeper. There was a certain eagerness in the air of the elderly rascal most interested in the sale which seemed to indicate that he feared that the keeper might at any moment appear upon the scene.

They had fished all their lives in small boats, as we had sailed in them, and yet we had not one word of boat talk in common. We were of the present day, and the models of their boats

dated from the Cæsars. Fishing boats do not change and improve along the Mediterranean shore. The boatbuilder of two hundred years ago could come back and successfully ply his trade and use the same models that his fathers had taught him.

"That boat would be better for an iron shoe," said Stan, with a recrudescence of the boat-trader's instinct.

"Not at all! Not at all, M'ssieu'," replied the elderly fisherman, an uneasy eye fixed on me.

I fancied that he might have at home a sea-worthy wife, who sometimes prevented him from buying things which he should not.

"Iron on the keel of a boat causes her to sink. A bit of bad weather, a Mistral comes up, the waves come up, your sail pitches off — pouff!" — he illustrated this with a dramatic gesture — "down you go at the same moment — the iron inevitably drags you to the bottom. Then — finish!"

"I don't see," said Stan, "why you have no centreboards."

They looked at each other blankly. Stan's French, at the best, is not yet idiomatic, and he translated the word "centreboard" literally. He

took from his pocket a piece of paper, and drew a picture of a boat with a centreboard. He made a boat of his hands, and with a chip of wood showed the attentive crowd the working of this useful apparatus.

"Ah-h-h!" they breathed. They understood.

"M'ssieu', those boats of that cast are the type of the most dangerous," they explained, "unsuited entirely for our rough waters. There has never yet been a fishing boat here with a centreboard — nor will there be, thank God, while our boatbuilders have any sense left. Safe boats are of the model that you see before you, the model of the Je l'Aimais."

"I don't see how your boats come about without a centreboard," Stan persisted.

With the tact of Frenchmen, they ignored this question. It may be that they did not think it important whether a boat came about quickly or not, never having sailed in the kind that did.

"There came to this harbor," said one of the other fishermen, "an Englishman in a boat such as you describe, M'ssieu'. He went out one day, the Mistral came up; we never saw him again."

"The centreboard," added another stout

sailor, "may be good for other waters — not for these."

"We have always sailed in such boats," a bent-over grandfather clinched the argument.

There fell on us one of those sudden and unaccountable silences that come over people in the midst of busy talk. Far off we could hear a merry-go-round playing. The cheerful noises of the beach rose about us, calling us like the voice of a friend. The Je l'Aimais and Stan looked each other in the face while she sung to him her false siren chant.

"I can be bought cheap — cheap — cheap," I could hear her telling him. "I am old and dried up, but I am a boat. I can be your own boat. You can go in me where you like. You can see every little nook of this lovely coast. I can be bought for nothing, for nothing at all." Of all songs in the world, this song without music is the one which can lure Stan farthest afield. I do not mind a real boat making him commit follies for her sake, but it hardened my heart to think of the decrepit Je l'Aimais putting the comether on my husband.

"Why did n't you all go out to-day?" he asked suddenly. I like to think that a suspicion

HE MADE A BOAT OF HIS HANDS

of what the Je l'Aimais and her kind really was came over him. It was a beautiful day, the sun bright above, and no hint of coming storm; a little Mistral blowing—a nice fair breeze that would hardly have been considered a lady's breeze off the New England coast.

"The Mistral!" they replied in one voice. "No one goes out when the Mistral blows. Boats that go out when the Mistral blows end up at Africa, if they end up at all; unless —" and Saucisse pointed a dramatic finger downward.

"You could beat back," Stan suggested.

They looked at one another pityingly. He had given another indication of insanity.

"One cannot beat back against the Mistral," said the elderly fisherman, with the air of a man who delivers a proverb of Solomon. And all together they burst out into talk of the deadliness of the Mistral.

Stan broke in on their chatter in a business-like American way.

"Write to the owner of the boat in Antibes and find out what her exact price is, and then find some one who will make an estimate of her repairs," he commanded.

The writing to the owner in Antibes seemed

simple, but an exact estimate as to the cost of the repairs was a different matter; the simple Saint Raphaëlese does n't like to be pinned down to the concrete in this brutal Anglo-Saxon way. Babel arose again.

"It would n't be much," they vociferated.

"It depends upon how much M'ssieu' insists upon having done," said some one.

"And upon how many coats of paint he has in his mind," said a second.

A woman on the outskirts of our little crowd admitted in an undertone that she believed that paint had gone up this year. And the hour having come for lunch, we dispersed, every one of us pleased with himself, since each opposing party had the consoling feeling of knowing the other to be wanting in intelligence.

I formed a little third party by myself, and what I thought of the Je l'Aimais, or what I thought of Stan, I will not say, but my pleasure in my own superior thoughts was dominated by the impotent question: Would Stan buy her or would he not?

STAN LEARNS TO SAIL

CHAPTER X

WHEN I looked out of the window the next morning, it seemed as if the beach had blossomed in the night with strange, exotic flowers, or as if a flock of birds with flame-colored wings had just that moment alighted there. The fishing fleet of Saint Raphaël was drawn up high and dry on the crescent-shaped beach, as is the immemorial custom, and the many-colored sails of the boats were being dried in the morning sun. Beyond, the Mediterranean danced as blue as the guide-books pretend it is, and as the Mistral still blew gently, I knew the fishing fleet would not go out that day.

There were more things happening on the beach than the mere drying of sails. Old men were mending nets of fabulous lengths; women were hanging their clothes out to dry, and others were sitting gossiping on the keels of boats; others, again, were washing out wine-casks. And, since the day was one when the cautious Mediterranean fisherman would not venture forth — though it would have seemed the

top of a fine morning to one of our Gloucester men — all sorts of small repairs were going on on the boats themselves; here, one man was giving a coat of paint to his boat's keel; there, another was doing a bit of calking; or again, a man was letting a patch into the side of his boat. And these things were all done with a thoroughness — even with a ponderousness — that our land knows nothing of. The patch that was being let in I could see from my window; it would outlast the fisherman's children's children, if the boat did. The boats themselves, though none of them was much over forty feet, were of the same substantial build; they were as broad-beamed as the women of Saint Raphaël, and built of ponderous planks and beams — boats built to last for generations, if one liked.

The beach of Saint Raphaël was more than a shipyard, more than a place to mend nets. It was the town park; it was the town nursery. Here fat French babies rolled around, tugging at the skirts of their mothers, who industriously plied the small activities of knitting, mending, and what not, such as thrifty French women love to bring with them into the open when they give their babies an airing.

Besides this, the beach was the place where the cart-people pitched their booths. I could see from my window the waffle-man dexterously making long, snake-like cakes through a funnel-shaped machine. Behind him, his wife sat on the steps of the cart, which was their home, preparing the midday meal, and gossiping with the neighbors. Further along, the wife of the rival waffle-man flaunted her feather boa contemptuously. It was perhaps because of the feather boa and a certain artificiality of complexion that she had no such solid standing among the good people of Saint Raphaël as did her plainer competitor. French people are conservative, and any one will agree that if you live in a cart which is drawn by hired mules from place to place, and earn your living by making penny cakes and waffles out in the open air, naturally a feather boa and an artificial complexion, a hat and a long skirt, are conspicuously out of place in the state of life to which God has called you.

The greatest crowd was gathered around the bird-man, who was industriously raffling his green paroquets. One paid a sou for a ticket, and if one drew a lucky number, one might get

a little green bird. A great many people raffled every day for these birds; I did myself, but I never saw any one carry a paroquet away with him, although Stan says he has. Like those of the other cart-dwellers, the bird-man's cart was directly back of his booth, and a large bull-dog lay at the door sunning himself and pretending to watch over his master's chattels; I had found out, however, that for all his undershot jaw and red eyes, he was a venal beast, and could be bought off by a pat on the head and a kind word or two. Further off down the beach the merry-go-round was in full swing, whirling round its little wooden horses to the inspiring air of "*Viens Poupoule.*"

Up and down the beach broad-hipped, short-skirted, full-chested women, with bright-colored kerchiefs knotted round their necks, came and went on their business, hung up their multi-colored wash, darned their husbands' breeches, peeled vegetables for dinner; plying, indeed, on the beach, all the little familiar occupations that a New England woman would keep for her back porch.

The men who were not at work on their boats grouped themselves into little knots, gossiping

HE WAS A VENAL BEAST

about the catch of fish, the arrival of the next sand boats from Nice, and the probable duration of the present Mistral. Presently I heard Stan's voice behind me.

"She 's got the mellowest sail you ever saw," he said; and well I knew who "she" was. "A better color than any of those down there. Come along and buy a chart of the coast."

Below in the hotel café there was a difference of opinion as to where a detailed chart of the azure coast might be bought. One told us that charts of the nature we described might be purchased at the custom-house. Another recommended us to go to the Mairie, while still another kindly indicated the Inspector of the Port as the dispenser of all charts and nautical information. I saw our morning's work cut out for us, and was glad; for after all, it does no one any harm to buy a chart, and it amuses Stan.

When we got it at last, the coast between us and Cannes, and again from Cannes to the Peninsula of Antibes, seemed singularly devoid of small harbors; a bare, rocky coast it was, which perhaps accounted for the fact that the Romans always pulled their galleys up on the beach at night and slept ashore — which custom

has been followed ever since by the dwellers on the north coast of the Mediterranean.

The absence of harbors did not discourage Stan. "There will always be," he asserted, "some little shelter where one can lay up a boat of this size. I can't imagine anything more fascinating," he went on, "than a cruise from here to Genoa in a little boat."

Neither could I, if I could have sent on the nurse and baby by mail, *poste restante*, and gone myself in a boat of a build which I understood better; for I have the woman's distrust of anything I do not understand, and I will say for myself, my distrust of the small fishing craft of the Mediterranean was soon to have its foundation.

Stan, however, continued in his enthusiasm. "It has n't been done," he exulted. "You see, it has n't been done. These land-hugging fishermen never go out beyond rowing distance, and the Englishmen who cruise up and down this coast have done it in yachts that they have had sent down. I believe in using the type of boat that the country affords. It is probably better adapted for the waters."

"Why don't the fishermen ever go out in rough weather, then?" I could n't help asking.

"Because they are Frenchmen from the south of France!" replied Stan, as if that explained all.

"Let 's go out and hire a boat for a sail," Stan suggested next; which I knew was merely an excuse for feasting his eyes on the lovely shape of the Je l'Aimais.

At home the hiring of a sailboat is a simple matter. One finds a boat to hire, and after a certain amount of decent traffic concerning the price, one hires it or one does n't. Here we found a sailboat to hire without the slightest difficulty, and we wished to go out in it at once. But, said the man — again it was Saucisse with whom we dealt: —

"M'ssieu' the Directeur of the Port goes once a week to visit his maternal aunt at Fréjus, and without his consent it would be impossible, M'ssieu' and M'dame, for me to take you."

Stan naturally inquired what M'ssieu' the Directeur of the Port had to do, in a land fairly bursting with Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité, in the taking of us out for an afternoon sail.

"M'ssieu'," replied Saucisse, with calm, "it is the law. I have no license to take out pleasure parties; therefore each time I take out any one

in my boat I must have my paper signed by M'ssieu' the Directeur of the Port. Otherwise, were anything to happen to you, I should be responsible to the government for your deplored corpses. You can see, M'ssieu', the embarrassment it would put a poor man with seven small children dependent upon him to, to be responsible to the French government for the corpses of two distinguished foreigners. I cannot do it, M'ssieu'. To-morrow, if you like — to-morrow in the earliest dawn — I will get the signature of M'ssieu' the Directeur of the Port. But this afternoon — impossible."

The next morning we started forth in the Young Louis, the boat of Saucisse. We started forth, it is true, against the remonstrances of Saucisse himself, his wife, the fishermen of Saint Raphaël, the Director of the Port, the taker of customs, and the town physician. They all said it was no day to go sailing. Very little wind blew, the sky was hardly overcast, but still it was no day for a lady to venture forth, and they stood upon the massive structure of the mole, a picturesque, head-shaking crowd, watching our departure.

"Wind may come from those clouds," Saucisse

told us ominously. "Sooner or later, wind is sure to come."

"Is n't your boat seaworthy?" Stan asked, with some temper.

"M'ssieu'," replied Saucisse, hurt, but still with dignity, "I did n't think of my boat. I have been out often when the wind blew," he continued proudly. "I think of Madame. If the wind blows, waves inevitably rise" — he spoke as though he were imparting new scientific information to Stan — "and if the waves rise, the spray will blow from them. And then" — he paused dramatically — "Madame will be wet. Do what we may to prevent it, Madame will be wet from the spray of the sea. I don't like it. We would do best to stay within the harbor. Still —" He bent himself to his oars.

Stan watched him rowing for a moment or two. It was a heavy boat, and required no mean pair of shoulders to get up what we so insistently call "a white-ash breeze." Then: —

"Why don't you put your sail up?" he inquired. "Why don't we sail out of the harbor?"

Saucisse bent to his oars.

"It is not the custom," he said. "We always

row in and out of the harbor. It prevents confusion. The wind, as you see, is against us. Were all the boats to tack back and forth, disaster might result. It is better so; we have always rowed in and out of the harbor."

He bent to his oars again.

Stan subsided, but I knew that he was hurt to the very core of his yachtsman's heart. His feelings, I knew, were similar to those of a well-brought-up girl who finds herself having to commit publicly some grossly unconventional act. Presently, after we had passed the mole and had cleared what other few boats were out, with infinite leisure, with none of the snap known to the North Atlantic yachtsman, stopping to talk with Stan, who was very polite under the trying circumstances, Saucisse finally unrolled his lateen sail, which lay across the bottom of the boat, and hooked it on near the top of the mast.

"I think I'd like to go across the bay," Stan informed him.

Serenely, with uninterrupted calm, Saucisse headed in the other direction.

"The wind does n't serve for that course to-day, M'ssieu'," said he, with tranquillity. "It

would be best to go down past the *lion rouge* and the *lion d'or*."

This he explained as one explains things to a very young and rather unintelligent child. "We shall have a reach there and a reach back." He took up the tiller. "Let us hope," he said, "the wind does not change, otherwise the little waves will come up in a choppy fashion, and we shall be compelled to row home."

"Why?" Stan demanded.

Saucisse looked at him with a pitying eye.

"One has to row home," said he, "when one's sail pitches off,"— which, it seems, is the habit of the picturesque lateen sail in anything like a sea way.

I sat quiet, but content. I had sailed with my husband seven years, and in all that time I had never before heard his opinion disputed. In all those many years I had always seen him take whatever course he chose. I had seen him take the upper hand of other yachtsmen, and once of a New England fisherman, and much to his surprise and more to the fisherman's, he proved to be right; and especially I had had him take the upper hand of me. I had heard him use the pitying tone that Saucisse now employed. When

Saucisse opened his mouth and spoke, he was a communicative Frenchman, and ready to impart information to the stray foreigner, however ignorant or however mad.

He explained in words of one syllable the theory of sailing to my husband. He explained how the wind hit the sail, and how one was unable to sail against the wind, and why one pushed the tiller this way, and again pulled it that. He explained these things with the same unspeakable patience that I had had them explained to me, after I knew them all.

We returned from our sail without mishap. I did not get wet, the wind did not rise, the sail did not pitch off, and Stan had had the theory of sailing thoroughly explained to him by a comic old pusillanimous Frenchman. I did n't ask him if he had enjoyed the afternoon. I had.

THE CRUISE OF THE QUINZE MILLE VIÈRGES

CHAPTER XI

WHETHER he had enjoyed the sail or not, Stan's first act on arriving home was to find out if word had come from Antibes from the owner of the Je l'Aimais. It had not. "Why," said the fisherman in the red tam-o'-shanter, reproachfully, "it was only two or three days ago that we wrote!" Evidently such haste seemed to him indecent.

Stan had learned from Saucisse all he wished to know about sailing the native craft of the Mediterranean. There arose and grew in his mind a contempt for the Mediterranean fisherman and all his ways. He had sailed, single-handed, smaller boats on rougher water, although his business in life did n't take him on the sea, and these shore-keeping sailormen filled him with a wholesome New England disgust. He had always felt humble-minded in the face of a Gloucester man, and had expected to find the same metal in the fishermen along the Mediterranean coast; but except in the

pleasantest of weather, land was the place for them.

I don't know whether it was with the conscious desire of showing them how an American could sail one of their own boats that he chose a day with a trifle more wind than they considered wholesome to go out in alone, or whether he felt that he had had enough lessons in seamanship. We joyfully started off together a few mornings later in the Quinze Mille Vièrges, Saucisse having refused to hire us the Young Louis on such an unsuitable day for a lady to go sailing.

No word, in the mean time, had come from the owner of the Je l'Aimais, although more than a week had passed since we had opened negotiations for her purchase. Every day she had sung to Stan her song about owning one's own boat and the joy one can have on the face of the waters in a little boat that belongs to one's self and to no one else. He had waited with some impatience for the final letter. He had got estimates from the other men around the beach of how much the old Je l'Aimais ought to cost. It was true that the putting of her into the water would be far more than the cost of her disreputable old hulk, but, somehow,

this did n't impress Stan at all. What one spends on fitting up a boat afterwards never seems to count. It is like putting improvements into one's own house.

The next best thing after sailing in one's own boat is sailing in a hired boat without a captain, having one's own way, with no Saucisse to tell in which way one must head, or to draw long faces about the wind's coming up. We did n't mind the wind's freshening a little, anyway. Both of us were used to being wet with the spray of the sea.

So, contrary to all tradition, we hoisted our sail well in the harbor and made off for Saint Tropez, a town a few miles down the coast. A large concourse of beach loafers saw us off, and prophesied disaster with shrugs and gestures, while Saucisse openly expressed his opinion that had not M'ssieu' the Directeur of the Port been absent that day to visit his maternal aunt, he would never have allowed us to proceed forth ; although I don't think he could have interfered, even under the paternal law of the French government. There is no law which can prevent one from hiring a boat and going out in it, although a boat-owner must have his

papers signed before he takes out a pleasure party. In the first case, no jealous government can ask what has become of its citizens. Their loss is their own folly.

We had the wind over our quarter on the way out, and our boat made fair time. It was a heavenly day for a sail, and I knew that each mile in the Quinze Mille Vièrges made Stan think how much he wanted a boat of his own. We were both as pleased as children with everything. We liked the naïve working of the lateen sail, we admired the marvelously clear water. We stopped in little coves along the lonely coast just for the fun of exploring, like two children.

Then we headed for home about noon, after a perfect run of three hours. The wind had shifted slightly, which meant a beat back. We made very little headway. There was a certain big, cone-shaped pine tree, I remember, that seemed to walk along the shore with us. I said nothing. It seemed to me one of those times in a woman's life when questions are superfluous, and when it is even better not to talk at all.

Finally Stan burst out.

"I believe," he exploded, "that this darned prehistoric dishpan is falling off!"

That was just what was happening. We were falling off. A steady adverse wind was calmly pushing her away from the land, and as we had no centreboard or keel, the Fifteen Thousand Virgins was acting just as a sail rowboat would have done under similar circumstances.

"Perhaps she'll go better on the other tack," said Stan.

We tried to come about. We nosed up into the wind, and there her lovely red sail, mellowed by the Mediterranean sun, flapped as useless as a flag. She had n't headway enough to come about.

Stan sat and gazed at it. He said nothing. There were no words in his vocabulary, brought up in a decent atmosphere as he had been, that would adequately have expressed what he felt towards that sail and that boat.

I still said nothing. I knew if I did anything, it would somehow get to be my fault. I made myself as inert and inconspicuous as the big pair of oars lying at the bottom of the boat. And still the red sail flapped derisively in the wind, and

still the gentle current bore us offshore. There was only one thing to be done; I knew it and Stan knew it. Neither spoke of what it was. There was only one way to get that boat around. I went forward, and stood in the bow of the boat, looking down into the water, with my back to Stan; he took up the heavy oars, and like any "son of a snail-catching Frenchman," he rowed his boat about.

It was the only way, but nevertheless it was a terrible come-down for a yachtsman who all his life has aimed to do in all things as a yachtsman should. Of course there was no need of my keeping up this false delicacy the entire afternoon. Slowly we made our way towards home, falling off a great deal, always driven further offshore, and always having to row about. We talked little about it, but we understood then why one cannot beat back against the Mistral, and why the Mediterranean fisherman goes out only on a pleasant day, and why Saucisse would n't head in the direction that he was told to. And we also saw that if the breeze freshened, there would be nothing for it but to take in our sail and row slowly and painfully home, and that even then, there being but one man among us,

the heavy boat might end up in some other place than the harbor of Saint Raphaël.

I almost wished that this had happened, and that we had had a thrilling adventure to record, instead of the only climax being that a punctilious yachtsman had to row his boat about through long hours, while the sun and the waves smiled at him, and his wife, more sympathetic than the forces of nature, tried to pretend that she did n't know what an unyachtsmanlike performance was in progress. If we had been blown upon an alien coast and had to spend a night under a tree, it would have been a far more glorious tale. As it is, we have talked very little about this performance since.

But we were not to be deprived of every dramatic touch. It took us three hours to sail down to Saint Tropez; it took us nine to beat back. It might have taken us twice nine, but for the wind's shifting a little, and a little breeze enabling us to sail home the last three miles.

We arrived home after dark, at nine o'clock. On the mole as we came into the little harbor, past the little toy lighthouse, there was the flashing of lanterns and the hum of excited voices, and out of the darkness a voice hailed us. We

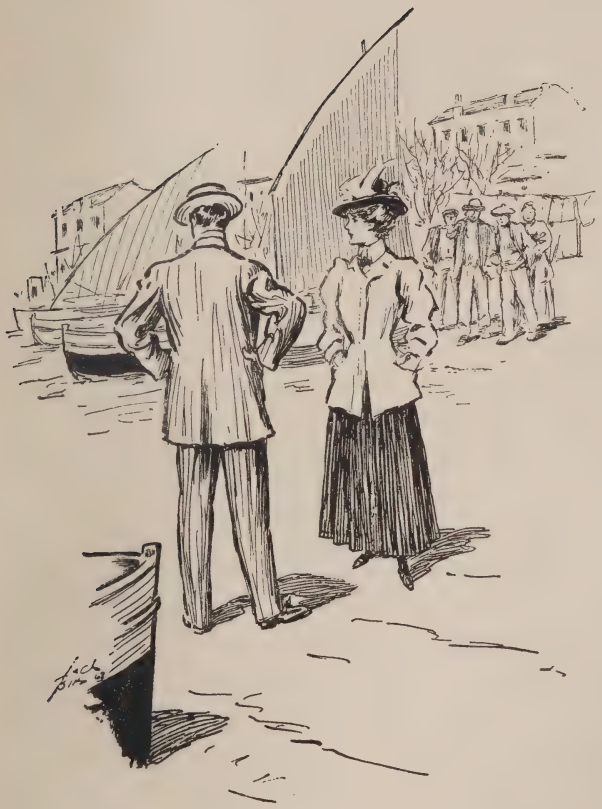
answered, and from a score of throats came up a cry: —

"They come! They come!" "It is they!" A woman's voice gave thanks to the Blessed Virgin. All the fishing population of Saint Raphaël was there and waiting for us. Two boats, we learned later, had gone out in search of us. Monsieur the Directeur of the Port was there, the Collector of Customs, with whom we had grown friendly, the doctor, our hotel-keeper, the head waiter, Saucisse, his voluble wife — all our friends, in fact.

A dozen hands helped us to land, while Monsieur the Directeur of the Port exclaimed to us in a reproachful tone: —

"Consider! Consider, M'ssieu', my embarrassing position had some mischance occurred, as we all so feared!"

We made what might be called a triumphal entry. We were pointed out afterwards on the beach. It seemed that no small boat of the size of the Quinze Mille Vièrges ever attempted to make Saint Tropez in an afternoon. We had accomplished a feat. Now they knew for a certainty that the madhouse was yawning for us; still, our seamanship was a proven matter.



WE WERE POINTED OUT AFTERWARDS ON THE BEACH

I did n't ask Stan if he still desired to explore the Mediterranean shore in a boat in use in these waters. He himself carried the whole thing off with bravado. He still inquired daily and with some acerbity if word had come from the owner of the Je l'Aimais, and he confided to me that he should take some one along to row the boat around, since such seemed to be the local custom.

My own opinion is that not for anything in the world would he have bought a boat that caused one such humiliation; but still, I cannot tell. Men are strange and tenacious animals, and it may be that had we ever heard from the owner of the Je l'Aimais, I should have to transfer it from the fleet of our narrow escapes to the fleet of the boats which we have owned. But we never did hear, so the question that put itself to me so vividly that day I first made the acquaintance of the Je l'Aimais, Would Stan buy or would n't he? was never answered. She was, after all, as definitely out of our reach as any of the stately boats we only dreamed of buying, and only because we were in a land where the words, "Step lively, please!" have never yet been heard. Three weeks was too short a time

for any man living in Antibes to get around to answering a business letter.

But I still have my curiosities. Had Stan bought the Je l'Aimais, would she have drowned us, or would we have had more memories to add to the day we spent on the Fifteen Thousand Virgins?

THE CONSCIENCE AND THE GONDOLA

CHAPTER XII

I AM not one who derides that excellent institution, the New England conscience; without it, I do not see how we could ever have had a New England, or where our literature would be today. Other countries have their special virtues, but it remained for New England to have a conscience; let us cherish it, therefore, just as if it were as large and overpowering as our writers have loved to pretend. Let us not hold with those who act as if the New England conscience were a morbid pathological symptom, like the overgrown liver of the Strasburg goose.

I now respect, too, its offspring, the yachtsman's conscience, which is New England conscience on its mother's side, and man-o'-war etiquette on its father's. Although I do not pounce on uncoiled ropes and coil them up with that fierce passion with which a New England housekeeper attacks the attic during the spring house-cleaning, and while I here confess that I do not feel disgraced forever if I do

not make my mooring the first time, still I think the yachtsman's conscience is a fine and noble thing, though often arbitrary in its workings and occasionally somewhat artificial in its punctiliousness.

Still, the conscience impresses me less than it did before I saw it at work in a foreign country. I had imagined it a stable quantity, as potent and as up and a-doing anywhere in the world as it is at home.

This is not so. There are forces bigger than it, and I purpose to tell the story of its undoing.

In the first place, Stan would have saved himself much trouble had he realized from the beginning that a craft forty feet over all, twenty-four foot water-line, six foot beam, and drawing four inches of water, should no more be considered a yacht than a toboggan or a snowshoe. Toboggan, snowshoe, and gondola are all highly specialized vehicles of transportation, called into being by peculiar conditions; and as a toboggan should not be confused with a real sleigh, neither should a gondola be looked on as a real boat; nor do I think would Stan have so considered it but for his yachtsman's conscience. For while we were in Venice, it seemed

as if on its mother's side it harked back to some New England house-cleaning grandmother — the kind that ariseth ere it is light, and makes all the rest of the family rise too. It did not wake the first day; it lay in wait for the moment when we should have a gondola of our own.

We did not imagine, in the beginning, that we should have a gondola; an unpretentious sandolo, propelled by a beautiful but rascally little boy, seemed to us nearer the kind of boats that we were used to, and more in keeping with the humble station in life to which God has called us.

We had hardly said sandolo to each other when, by some mysterious wireless, news of us was sent forth and half a dozen sandolo boys were yapping under our windows.

"Those sandolos are in filthy shape," Stan grumbled. "They haven't been scraped since the Austrians left Venice. We'll try one, though," he conceded, with gloom.

Our sandolo darted off with its peculiar rocking motion.

"This boat," Stan announced with conviction, "won't be a safe boat for the baby. If

we ever sent the baby and nurse out alone, I should n't feel comfortable a second." Which, being translated, meant that Stan wanted a gondola like those which passed us, arching their lovely necks proudly, manned by gondoliers who sported bright-colored sashes. One of these fine water-birds our sandolo hurtled rudely, at which the gondola turned on us sidewise, with, it seemed to me, a wounded, haughty expression. Stan's eye rested on this gondola with an expression such as I have known it to wear only for a boat that he is falling in love with.

"There's no doubt about it," he said accusingly, "sandolos are crank boats. I'm getting too old to take risks. Risk your child's life if you like," his virtuous manner connoted, "I shall not."

We dismissed the sandolo, and Stan went for a walk. Later, he returned with a glow on his face which means, "I have found a boat I like."

"I've been looking," he said, "at a perfect peach of a sandolo. You ought to see it! You can see your face in her," he added reassuringly, as though a sandolo you could see your

face in were less cranky than those on which the varnish had worn off.

"How much is it a week?" I asked.

"A week!" Stan echoed. "It's not for rent —it's for sale! And at such a price! You could n't fail to get back on it some day what you paid for it. The man," he added, with a touch of self-consciousness, "sent his children out in it every day."

It is a curious fact that Stan always has more confidence in a boat that he owns than in any boat that he rents, as if the very fact that a boat belongs to him creates some mysterious bond between them, which causes it to render him some occult allegiance, by which it pledges itself not to drown him or his.

"I don't suppose we could buy a sandolo," he went on; "still, there's no harm in looking at her!"

We went together. She *was* a beautiful boat, and everything that our boats usually were not. She sat there in the little canal and sparkled impertinent and alluring glances at us. We neither of us spoke of her that afternoon, for we both knew if we did, her purchase would be as good as accomplished; we knew, too, that dearly as

we wanted her, we could not afford her, and yet not to buy her offended our New England principles of economy. Moreover, while we stood in her beguiling presence, Stan had heard my unspoken pleading of: —

"Oh, do buy it — and take the blame of it!"

I make no doubt that we should have bought it if, that evening, when we returned home, there had not been drawn up before our *riva* the most beautiful gondola in Venice. It was a gondola from a Venetian *novella*. Its forward part was overlaid with rich carving of acanthus leaves, interwoven in pleasing design — not too much, not enough to be pretentious, just enough to give the effect of a little extra splendor, to put this gondola in the class of gondolas of men of discriminating taste, apart from the ordinary, cab-stand gondolas.

In it stood a red-faced gondolier. His striped jersey was torn and dirty, and his cap, one of those long, pointed, knit affairs that are worn as nightcaps by men in France, lacked a tassel, but there was something appealing about him which made one love him. He seemed like a bedraggled Newfoundland dog, who for want of a master and a proper home has been sleep-

IN IT STOOD A RED-FACED GONDOLIER

ing in the rain. He looked at us with his faithful dog's eyes, leaning at ease upon his oar, in a pose as picturesque as though he had been dressed with a proper sash and hat. He smiled at us trustingly and said in soft Venetian:—

"I have brought the gondola of the Signori."

I turned to Stan. I had expected — and sneakingly I had hoped — to see the expression on his face which means that nothing shall stand between him and his desire; which means that he is willing to go without shoes — yes, and make his wife and child go without shoes — rather than give up the boat he wants. Instead, he looked as though he pitied that splendid gondola.

"Here, you," he cried to the man. "Behold! Why don't you — why don't you —"

He turned to me, and upon his face was its frequent impatient red; he does not like to ask me for foreign words. "Margery, what 's the Dago for brass?"

"Metal" was the only translation I could give him.

"Why don't you clean your metal?" he demanded.

"I have cleaned it," replied the man sweetly.

"*Che! Che! Che!*" clicked Stan, and waggled his forefinger as he had learned to wag it in Tuscany.

The man spread his hands and tilted his head in a charming gesture of deprecation. He reminded one of a dog who begs pardon with the lifting of a floppy paw. His gesture conveyed to us subtly that, although he thought that he had cleaned his brass, we evidently knew better.

"It 's a shame," said Stan, "to see a beautiful boat like that with dirty brass! Think what she 'd be like if those dolphins did n't look like a ship's galley just after dinner!"

Here it was that the New England conscience stirred in its sleep.

"I 'm going to hire that boat," he asserted, "and get that brass *bright*."

This was no subterfuge to get hold of the boat. Not a sail did I get in her that afternoon. Stan sent the man, whose name was Giuseppe, to buy what is used in Venice for making brass bright, and growled because it was not the Pütz pomade with which I was accustomed to shine up the brass on our boats at home.

Giuseppe gave the brasses what is known as

"a lick and a promise," and stood smiling and obedient before us, waiting to start forth, only to hear Stan say: —

"That's not clean! That's not the way to polish brass! Give here!" and for want of Italian words he gave Giuseppe an object lesson in the art of polishing brass.

I once knew a narrow-built New England woman who, when I commented on the spotlessness of her house, said drearily, "Yes, I fight It day and night." So Stan fought "It" — he fought it on the dolphins, he fought it on the *ferro*, he fought it on the scroll of the stern. And perceiving that he was not getting the worth of his gondolier's services, he had the cushions and carpet removed upon the *riva*, and there brushed and beaten. I sat by, gloomy and ill-tempered, while my afternoon of joy was taken from me bit by bit.

"There!" said Stan, the afternoon being finished; "now that gondola looks as it ought to! I'm sorry we can't hire it."

But I have New England blood of my own.

"Can't hire it!" I repeated. The waste of cleaning some one else's gondola affronted me. "We've *got* to have it."

Stan gave me a look which meant, "The price of this gondola be on your head!"

"Come to-morrow at eight," he commanded.

I woke up next morning with a joyful fear, like a child at Christmas. Perhaps, after all, Santa Claus had not come! Perhaps, after all, there would be no gondola! Stan apparently shared my feelings, for all I could see of him was the back of his pajamas; the rest of him hung perilously out of the window. I hurried to the other window.

"Has it come?" I asked.

Stan turned toward me with a sour scowl. It had. A little way down San Vio lay our splendid gondola, without its face washed nor its hair combed. Giuseppe, unshaven, lay coiled up on its soft cushions and slumbered.

"Look at that brass!" said Stan. "Hey, Giuseppe!"

The word was taken up down the Vio. "Hey, Giuseppe! Your Signori, Giuseppe!" Small boys echoed it from side streets, with "Hey, Giuseppe!" He was evidently a well-known figure of the quarter. "Asleep again, Giuseppe!"

He sprang to his feet.

"*Eccomi! Eccomi!*" he cried cheerfully.

"Your metal!" shouted Stan from the window. "Your metal! — I can see dust an inch thick from here on the gondola," he announced to me across the space of wall between our two windows, in a tone suggesting that I had failed in my housewifely duties.

"How do you expect that you are going to hold your job, if you don't keep your metal bright?" was what he attempted to bawl in Italian. His tone conveyed to Giuseppe that it would be best for him to begin cleaning the gondola — and suddenly.

Stan began dressing. After each garment he poked a suspicious head out of the window. Now he muttered things to me about the shiftlessness of Italians, and again he threw a warning cry to Giuseppe. When he had finished dressing, he swallowed a cup of coffee and went to his house-cleaning. I found him, after my own leisurely breakfast, rubbing his handkerchief on one piece of brass after another to see if any dirt came off; and as often as he rubbed, he turned the accusing bit of linen on Giuseppe in stern silence, and Giuseppe, quelled, hastened to the offending spot. This morning

he seemed more like a devoted, well-meaning dog than ever. One could imagine his tongue hanging out of his mouth as he panted after his unwonted exertions. He gave a clever imitation of a man who has realized that the polishing of brass is a serious matter.

But even after the gondola was faultless, the bright morning was still darkened by the dilapidated appearance of Giuseppe.

"That man has got to keep himself cleaner. He 's got to wear better clothes," Stan announced.

He conveyed this at once to Giuseppe.

"I 'm a poor man," Giuseppe deprecated gently. "In other times I had many clothes — sashes, scarfs — ah, I shone in those days! Now —" He wagged a finger; he had no other clothes, not a rag, was what his finger eloquently told us; and somehow further conveyed to us that his nakedness was no fault of his own — that he had suffered wrongs and injustice.

"I know a shop," he continued, "where clothes for gondoliers abound. If the Signori —"

Stan ignored this suggestion.

"We will go," he commanded peremptorily, "to San Salvatore."

Now, it is a bad thing to be too strong-minded. It wears out the character. We had been as strong-minded as we could be all day, and we were so occupied in San Salvatore in saying strong-mindedly that it was not our business to provide gondoliers with their clothing, that I, for one, have no more memory of this church than if I had never been there; but I am sure that, if I were to go into it, strong-mindedness would again rush over me. What I do remember is the inside of a stuffy shop, piled full of blue garments, and another little shop, gay with bolts of bright-colored silks and cottons and gold fringes, with which gondoliers make their scarfs and sashes. That 's what comes of being too strong-minded. The reaction is disastrous.

As I look back on it now, the score between the East and West stood thus at the end of that first day: One for the West: Stan had got his brass cleaned; five for the East: Giuseppe had his new clothes and several naps. At the time, of course, we were not conscious of the struggle for supremacy which Giuseppe on the one hand and we on the other were fighting out. The New England conscience had been

victorious in one, and wheedling, soft-spoken, beguiling Italy in the other. Moreover, Giuseppe had seen Stan's passion for cleanliness, and had used his knowledge swiftly and efficiently, and we knew it, though Giuseppe tried to throw the sand of gratitude in our eyes.

THE FAILING OF THE CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER XIII

AS I look back, I can easily trace that silent battle of which at the time I was not so much as aware. We would begin the day with an apparent victory, for the early morning hours were spent in overseeing Giuseppe not doing his work. I can see now that we spent our strength too freely in the first part of the day. We felt that we had really accomplished something, and were disarmed, and would let Giuseppe and the gondola take us where they would. Without our knowing it, they were continually winning obscure points in the game. They and Venice were undermining that backbone of our strength, our sense of duty. We were content when they took us into obscure little back waters, where the silence was broken only by the plash of our oars and the melancholy "Poppen-jee!" as Giuseppe warned the empty air that he meant to turn from one deserted water lane into another as deserted. They carried us past high walls — walls green below and diver-

sified by crabs where the canal lapped them; above, rose and saffron, here and there showing patches of deeper rose where pieces of plaster had fallen from the bricks.

Through grilled gateways at the water's edge, we could look deep into gardens which seemed to stretch away into forests. Everything was quiet; there was no sound even of a bird. Enchantment brooded over it. Then, suddenly, out of the silence, Giuseppe and the gondola carried us under some populous bridge, where two files of Venetian women in black shawls passed ceaselessly. The chatter of the noisy Venetian people came to us for a moment. Then silence again. The enchantment of the enchanted city was upon us.

In silence we passed by beautiful old palaces, whose defaced hatchments pleaded with us to remember how glorious their dwellers once had been. We passed the beautiful iron gateway of a garden, from the summit of which one frail autumn rose mirrored its brave little head in the canal. It was such a venturesome little flower, and so poetical in the midst of the decay, that I turned to Stan for sympathy. He spoke.

"This son of a sea crab has n't shined the *ferro* to-day!"

But while such skirmishing for position was continual, it is the decisive actions which stand out in my mind. The most important one began soon after we came, when, late one afternoon: —

"Giuseppe," Stan commanded, "go out to the lagoons beyond the Giudecca."

I recognized the tone of the skipper. Unconsciously I slipped into my familiar attitude of able seaman, and forbore to ask why, as I should have done had we been in a thing on wheels.

"I think," Stan was good enough to explain, "it would be nice to see the sunset."

As we slid out into the canal of the Giudecca, Stan turned and watched Giuseppe.

"There 's not so much to rowing a gondola," he said. "In principle it 's not unlike a canoe. A man who can use a single paddle ought to get the hang of this thing in a short time."

We threaded our way among the big fish-baskets and nets of the Giudecca, and out into the sunset beyond. Giuseppe knew all about sunsets and *forestieri*. He made us fast to a

post favorable for watching the august spectacle, curled himself up, and went to sleep. It was the usual routine.

To the right and left of us, at a little distance, were other gondolas; most of them contained lady artists, who had come out to paint, for the millionth time in history, another variation of that well-known picture, "Sunset on the Lagoons." Well, one cannot wonder that it should so often have been painted, and it was all that everybody has said about it; and I was losing myself, as every one must, in the first wonder of it, when Stan sprang to his feet.

"Giuseppe," he said, "cast off that rope. I believe," he went on, "that I can row this craft out here where there's plenty of room."

He picked up the oar and let it fall into the curious little contrivance that the gondoliers so amazingly use as an oar-lock, dipped the oar into the water, and bent his body strenuously forward. The next moment the gondola had whirled around like a top, and my back was turned to the sun; the oar, conscious that an untrained hand held it, sprang derisively from the crotch, and I had the satisfaction of seeing an experienced oarsman do what I had never

STAN CATCHES A VENETIAN CRAB

been permitted to do under pain of derision — "catch a crab."

I mentally added to my knowledge of boats this little observation: crabs, in gondolas, are caught forward, not backward. Stan also added this piece of knowledge to his boatsman's lore.

He picked himself up and looked at the oar sternly. His disapproving eye traveled to me. I tried to make myself as inconspicuous as possible. If I budged or spoke, I knew the crab would turn out mysteriously, as had so many of our small accidents, to be my fault again. Venice disappeared; the lagoons vanished. Again I was the shivering cabin-boy, trying to evade the wrath of the "Old Man."

"Get back in there!" Stan spoke sternly to the oar.

"If the Signore —" Giuseppe suggested.

"Enough," said Stan. "I know how to row a boat."

With this he spun the gondola around again. Again the oar, indignant at its unskillful handling, flew out. This time Stan did not fall; he was making progress. By the time the gondola had spun round in its tracks for the sixth time, the oar no longer came out.

"Ha!" said Stan triumphantly, "I 'm getting the hang of the thing."

"To go forward," suggested Giuseppe, "the Signore should — "

With the air of conferring a favor, Stan permitted Giuseppe to take the oar. The gondola responded to its master's hand. With its clean, effortless motion, it leaped forward. Stan watched Giuseppe attentively.

"Give here," he commanded. "It 's just like canoeing; you turn your oar at the end of a stroke," he announced triumphantly.

"If the Signore will go *piano, piano* — less force at first — "

Stan gave a less vigorous stroke to the boat and progressed sideways a foot.

"Hold your left hand so," advised Giuseppe. The voice of the instructor penetrated his usual deferential tones.

"The left hand should be further down," commanded Giuseppe, as Stan caught another crab.

Then, for the next ten minutes, I witnessed what I never had dreamed I should see — Stan meekly permitting himself to be instructed in boat-lore by a lazy, red-faced Italian boatman,

who did not know the main sheet from the top-s'l halyards. Up to that moment, it had not occurred to me that my husband had anything more to learn about boats. I had looked upon him as omniscient. Without putting it into words to myself, I had fancied that he had come into the world knowing how to sail a boat. I had fancied that he had learned to row before he could walk.

As I watched Stan being instructed by Giuseppe, I realized that a real lover of boats is willing to learn anywhere and anyhow. Still, it hardly seemed fitting that I should witness this, and I turned my eyes away from Giuseppe and his pupil. It was then I noticed that the boat was steadily progressing sideways, crab-fashion. We were bearing down slowly, tranquilly, persistently, upon the gondola of a lady artist. I looked at Stan. He was engrossed in his oar. Giuseppe's eyes were fixed on Stan. From time to time he offered suggestions.

What happened shows how lacking in judgment is the able seaman. It had been impressed on me never to offer suggestions to the commanding officer, and I sat there, pusillanimously silent, while our gondola slowly sidled down on

that of the artist. It was the thousandth case, when I should have given warning, but, even up to the final thump, it did n't seem possible to me that such an impossible thing could happen as that Stan should not know where we were going.

It was not much of a collision, just a thumping of the two sides of the gondolas. My husband turned a displeased and astonished head on me.

"When you had so little to do," he exclaimed, "nothing to do but keep watch —!" He did not finish.

Guiltily I made our apologies to the painter. We fended off, while Stan said to Giuseppe, before joining me: "Well, I think I did very well for the first afternoon." We all ignored the fact that we had progressed some two hundred feet in a lateral direction.

We tried again the next afternoon, and for several afternoons; and at last the time came when the boat obeyed him so far as to move forward in a comparatively straight line. One day he even succeeded, during the half of an hour, in laying a straight course along the line of five posts, and then he rested his oar and

took his place beside me. I had expected a burst of triumph, but what Stan said was: —

"It 's no use, Meg, I can't do it. It takes a lifetime for these fellows to learn. In the course of six months or so I might be able to strike a two-knot gait on the lagoon without hitting a mud-bank, but I never could carry a boat into a canal, and there 's no use trying. I give it up."

I look upon that as one of the pathetic moments of my life.

Henceforth, Giuseppe took on a new importance. He could do something about a boat that Stan could not. We could not be independent of him. Stan could be *padrone* of his gondola; he could direct Giuseppe where to go; but he could not be skipper; he could not show him how to go there. He gave in with an amiability that filled me with pity. We never discussed his sorrow. He chafed under it until the day came when Giuseppe suggested that Stan should learn the forward oar, which, he said, was much easier. I had another moment of pathos in the eagerness with which my husband accepted this suggestion, and it was impossible not to exult with him when he mastered that

oar completely at the first lesson. In the return of my husband's good spirits I was grateful to Giuseppe — even after I found out that the brunt of brute work in a gondola falls on the forward oar; it is that which does most of the pushing; the rear oar has the light, skilled labor of steering.

The tactfulness of Italy had won another point. Giuseppe had satisfied his employers and won comparative repose for himself.

This contest between the gondola and Stan was the decisive battle. The Venetian boat had secrets that it would confide to no foreigner; only a Venetian would ever know by what trifling little flip of the oar a forty foot craft could be moved four inches this way or that, sideways or forward or backward or cat-a-cornered, at the will of the gondolier. Nor could any gondolier impart that knowledge; it was a part of him, instinctive as walking. Indeed, the steering of a gondola through crowded canals is a series of little, perfect miracles, a continual *tour de force*, and one that any gondolier — and here is the amazing part of it to us — can perform without apparently taking thought of what he is doing. He can exchange badinage

with a friend on the *riva* while he is going through as intricate and delicate a series of manœuvres as a performer on the tight-rope; he can turn his head around and explain in significant Venetian his opinion of the ancestry of a bargeman who has narrowly escaped crushing him while his oar causes his gondola to escape collision with another by a nicely calculated three quarters of an inch. Though one might try for years to learn it, one could never attain this nonchalant perfection. It is said that there are foreigners who have taken sandolo or gondola into the canals, but they do it as the dog walks on his hind legs. A foreigner can never master the ultimate secrets of a gondola; he can never learn to guide it when he is thinking of something else.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER XIV

MEANTIME, the reason for Giuseppe's nakedness when he came to us slid into our consciousness. It was his red nose that hinted it for one thing, and again the good-humored raillery from servants at many palace windows; for it seemed to us that there was not a palace in Venice whose Signori had not at some time employed Giuseppe. His pleadings for his wage in advance also told us much. When we emerged from a church, Giuseppe, a few seconds later, emerged from the nearby *trattoria*. After each of our absences his nose grew redder.

It was evident — everything pointed to it — that It had interfered with his work in the other hundred and fifty positions from which Giuseppe had been discharged, but we tried to pretend that in our case It would not interfere. Nor did It; we did not let It. We learned some things about the blind eye, Stan and myself, in those weeks. When our gondola went very slowly, "The wind is against us," I would say; and

when it knocked off its tar against the stones of Venice, "He is no longer a young man," apologized Stan, not realizing how this was sapping our moral strength, so that finally when It did interfere with his work, we had no resistance left.

One morning Stan looked out of the window as usual. Far down the Vio we could see the gondola. It was empty. Its carpet had not been spread; the *tende* were not put up.

"He has n't come," said Stan.

"I hope he 's not sick," I mitigated. In the background of my mind lurked the real explanation of his absence. I knew that It lurked in Stan's too. But here Stan plumbed for me the depths of his fall. Far from indignant, —

"Well, I rather hope he won't come to-day," said my husband blithely. "It 's time we took some of those walks that we 've been talking about so long. You can't really know Venice without walking a lot."

To the suggestion of the *cameriera*, "So Giuseppe has —" she lifted an airy hand to her mouth with a gesture of drinking — we turned blank faces.

After we had spent two days in "learning to

know Venice," Giuseppe appeared in our apartment, bleary-eyed and voluble. I noticed that he did n't take off his hat. He had had, he explained, a terrific pain in his stomach ; he spared neither gesture nor metaphor to explain to us how terrific this pain had been. It had been the grandfather of all pains. No one else had ever had such a pain as his ; but weak and trembling as he was, he, the faithful Giuseppe, had hastened back to his post.

"A drink would do your stomach good," Stan suggested, knowing all the time, in his New England soul, that he was helping a fellow creature on a career of slackness. But as he spoke, his eyes traveled up and down his gondolier's blouse, and as Giuseppe turned to bow his graceful Latin greeting to me, he revealed a shameless mend, that began at his collar and ended at his waist.

"What 's the matter with your blouse, Giuseppe?" Stan demanded.

"My blouse?" asked the unconscious Giuseppe. "It is newly cleaned. It is effulgent."

"Has there perhaps been a hole in it?" pursued Stan.

"A hole?" inquired Giuseppe. "Ah! Behold,

it is true — there has been a hole! Ah!" he protested, "those scoundrels of shopkeepers, to sell a blouse with a hole! I go to confront them with it." He backed toward the door.

"Giuseppe!" called Stan.

Giuseppe ceased his backward course.

"Hang it!" Stan flung to me, "that rip was n't there when we bought it."

Well I knew it had n't been there. It had been freshly caught together with stitches of the kind that save nine. And here was Stan almost willing to be convinced that it had always been there!

"It does n't do to push these Italians too hard," he apologized — he seemed actually to be protecting Giuseppe from my wrath. He compromised with his dying conscience by suggesting that it was customary to remove one's hat when in the house.

Giuseppe's hand flew to his head. With surprise he found that his unprincipled hat, with inanimate perversity, had somehow contrived to remain upon his head. He snatched it off.

"*Scusi, scusi, Signori!*" he murmured, and the involuntary courtesy of Italy coerced him into bowing low. There bobbed up from behind

his head something white, and as he stood straight again, a curl like that of an 1830 belle dangled from behind his ear.

It was not of hair; it was of cotton batting, and the other end of it was stuffed into a long, jagged crack traced white in Giuseppe's scalp. He saw our bewildered looks, and flung his hands out sidewise.

"Now," he said, with virtuous intonation, "I will tell the truth to the Signori. Yes, I will tell it to them. The hole in my blouse did n't come from the store. I knew it all the time. But Giuseppe is kind-hearted. Does he talk of unpleasant things in the company of ladies? Never! He does n't come to you crying of what has befallen him; no; rather than that, he risked the shame of impoliteness, keeping his hat on his head. Signori, a great misfortune befell your Giuseppe. A little more" — his eyes grew moist — "you might never have beheld him again. Signori, a knife it was that made the hole in my blouse and in my head, the knife of a drunken friend. Oh, Signori, how sharp is the knife of a drunken friend!"

He paused.

"Signori," he continued, in the tone of one

telling a commonplace tale, "I sit in the *trattoria*. I sit and eat my *pasta*. Enters a friend of mine, whom I have not seen for a year. When last I saw him, he went away taking with him my watch, a watch of the value of twenty *lire*, given to me by grateful *padroni*. He and my watch and chain of value disappeared together. When I see my friend, I say to him: —

"'Jail-bird and the son of jail-birds,' I say to my friend, 'robber of honest men's jewelry, restore to me my watch!'" Giuseppe's tone was one of unctuous courtesy.

"My friend, who is a robber and a murderer, tells me that I never had a watch and chain — there, in the *trattoria*, where many know I have had a watch and chain!" I say to my friend: —

"'Shameful one, you were born in the courtyard of Zanipolo!' and Signori, being in drink, this angers him, and — *zipp*, *zipp!* Giuseppe falls!"

"Well, well, Giuseppe," Stan cut him short. "Get the gondola ready."

"Signori," said Giuseppe, "loss of blood has made me weak. If the Signori would give me pay in advance —"

HE FLUNG OUT HIS HANDS SIDEWISE

Stan's hand traveled to his pocket. I looked out of the window, ignoring the incident. Half an hour afterwards, Giuseppe, having renewed his strength, helped us into the gondola. During the afternoon he grumbled to us accounts of his battle. From time to time, from behind me, I heard the words, "*Zipp, zipp!* And Giuseppe — poor, faithful Giuseppe — Giuseppe falls!"

I wish I might omit the humiliating sequence, but truth compels me to state that in the evening the street on which the back windows of our apartment opened was filled with shouts. We tried, Stan and I, over the evening lamp, to ignore the fact that our names were called, and that it was Giuseppe's voice which clamored for us. But even this decent reticence on our part was denied us, for Iola, our little maid, came pump-pumping up the stairs on some errand.

"Oh," she said, "listen to Giuseppe! Hey, but he roars! A proper beast is Giuseppe! He cries aloud down in the *calle* that the Signori have not paid him. That is what comes, Signori, of paying him two days in advance."

I looked at Stan. He looked away.

"Yes, he has spent the money of two days in advance in the wine shop of my aunt. Now he

will again get himself into debt, and there will be another canal closed to the Signori. Giuseppe dares not pass *trattorie* where he owes money. Did the Signori not know? That is the reason it takes the Signori so long to arrive at the Rialto. Giuseppe can go here, but not there!" She illustrated with expressive gestures. "There are many *trattorie* in Venice, and in almost all Giuseppe owes money. Soon the Signori can only go on the Grand Canal and the lagoons."

A loud burst of noise from the *calle* took Iola to the window.

"Ah, listen!" she said. "Giuseppe says he will work no longer. He discharges the Signori! My uncle comes out — he kicks Giuseppe!"

THE ANNIHILATION OF THE CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER XV

THE reader will please next observe my husband, the punctilious yachtsman, proceeding down the Grand Canal in a gondola, he rowing the forward oar himself. The back oar is rowed, perhaps you think, by a new and sober gondolier. It is not; it is rowed by Giuseppe. Moreover, the dolphins are dull and the *ferro* is rusty. Giuseppe's face is red, and he mutters to himself as he rows. But I maintain that it was the gondola's fault that we took Giuseppe back, for she "stood in" with Giuseppe shamelessly, in spite of the fact that he did not keep her brasses clean, or brush off her carpets. The day after the row, Giuseppe and the gondola appeared, ignoring all unpleasantness. They did it magnanimously, as though it were we who had made a scandalous noise in the Calle del Pistor. We paid no attention to them as we passed them on our walks, our dignified silence conveying to them that we were done with them forever. They both spent the day slumbering

peacefully by our *riva*. Whenever we passed they would come to life with "*Eccomi! Eccomi! Signori.*" They bowed touchingly to our blank faces whenever we came out or went in.

The fourth day Giuseppe frisked up to us blithely.

"*Per favore*, Signori," he said, "my pay!" He had the air of delicacy that one has when tactfully reminding people of a just debt. "And," he concluded, "if the Signori will give me money for the candles, I will also see that the gondola is tarred. Excuse me for calling the attention of the Signori to it, but the gondola is in a disgraceful condition."

He pointed to the gondola, which lay in San Vio, sulking.

"As long as the Signori said nothing about it, I said nothing; but the time is come when Giuseppe can no longer keep silence. Duty demands that Giuseppe shall say to the Signori: '*Scusi*, Signori, but it is my duty to remind the Signori that they owe it to their gondola to provide candles for its blacking.'"

I shall always believe that some second sight caused Giuseppe to hit upon the one thing that would have made Stan forgive him. Interested

in spite of himself, "Candles for blacking?" Stan asked.

"As the Signore knows, candles are required for blacking," Giuseppe repeated, "and of the best. I have already spoken to the gondola maker behind San Trovaso. He awaits me and the gondola. If the Signori have never seen a gondola blacked, perhaps they would graciously consent to accompany me?"

Of course Stan wanted to see a gondola blacked. Choice was beyond him. He carried off his defeat with a swagger that was borrowed from Giuseppe's own.

"You can come too, if you like," he condescended to me. "Giuseppe, where do you get these candles?"

A boatyard in Venice is unlike other boatyards, as Venice is unlike other cities. Every two months all well-conducted gondolas repair, each to its own boatyard, for grooming.

There is a certain familiar intimacy among these establishments. None of them is very large. Each has its own select clientèle. Here a gondola is fairly sure of meeting no stranger; instead, it will come across childhood friends. It may watch new gondolas under construction

and learn for whose family they are intended, or to what *tragetto* they are destined. With us a boatyard is a place where boats are born, and, alas, a place where many boats die! You may see them any day, withering away with age, tragic spectres of the boats they once have been. Often they may have been deserted while they were but in the prime of old age by treacherous owners, who put them up the year before, promising to have them overhauled in the spring, and then left them to shrink and die, until one day there is nothing for it but to break their bare, weather-beaten planks for old junk.

Gondolas do not do their dying in the Venetian boatyards. Now and then one may see a dead gondola hauled up on some *riva* of the Giudecca, but for the most part dead gondolas are as much out of sight as is the Campo Santo.

When we arrived at the boatyard back of San Trovaso, a new gondola was having its smooth planks bent into shape. A torch was being held under it, and as the wood softened, it was bent into ever more graceful lines.

Amid the shavings of the shop stood an iron

HAVING ITS SMOOTH PLANKS BENT INTO SHAPE

cauldron on legs. A fire of shavings blazed beneath it on the hard earth floor. It was a casual sort of a fire, and seemed to have wandered to the spot by chance. To our eyes it looked as if it might wander out from beneath the pot any minute and lick up the shavings around it, the store itself, and the gondolas in it. Apparently it was only through its own good-will that it remained where it should.

We watched the spectacle, which will always remain a miracle to foreigners, for a few moments.

"These Italians," Stan conceded, "can teach us something after all."

Giuseppe kicked some shavings into the fire and unwrapped his package of candles. A small boy and the owner of the yard gathered with us around the cauldron. Giuseppe threw into the pot the package of two or three dozen candles, and left them to become liquid wax, while the owner of the yard gave our gondola a baptism of fire. He carried a lighted torch over every inch of her sides and bottom. The tar melted and ran off; sometimes the fiery drops fell into the carpet of shavings with which the yard was everywhere strewn. Why the yard and the gon-

dola were not instantly in flames, I cannot say. I had myself little impulses to rush forward and throw my cloak over blazing parts of the boat, and so, I think, had Stan, for when it was all over, he drew a long breath.

By this time our candles were liquid, and the *padrone* poured soot into the liquid out of a bag, and stirred the mass around with a stick. It was a forbidding, oily soup, with iridescence floating upon it, as repulsive to see as mud near an oil factory. The small boy appeared with a large handful of waste; he dropped it into the mess and squeezed it. The stuff oozed unpleasantly from between his fingers and streamed down into the pot. He made for the gondola, and the *padrone* and Giuseppe followed with the cauldron. During the half hour that followed, the bottom and sides of the gondola were thoroughly sponged over. It was all done with a perfection of technique — no hesitation anywhere; every one knew his part. If one loved a boat, one could but like the men who so well knew how to treat her. It was accomplished, too, with the greatest economy of time and labor.

"Gad, that's simple!" said Stan, and he turned an approving gaze on Giuseppe.

It was in this fashion that the gondola and Giuseppe got around us again. We had been taken behind the scenes of a gondola's world, and had been shown something that we knew we should always be glad that we had seen, and through Giuseppe. Besides this, everything that one does for a boat attaches it to one. As we got into our shining gondola, Stan turned to me: —

"After all, you see, he really does care for his boat in the essentials. He may not go in for form, any more than a fisherman does, but the main thing is, he cares for the things that count."

So I knew Giuseppe had been forgiven. I also knew he had been forgiven not only for this time, but that he had been forgiven in advance for all future misdemeanors. As long as we should stay in Venice, that gondola and no other should take us to and fro, and it would be propelled, when it was propelled, by Giuseppe. Venice and a gondola and Giuseppe had combined against us; they had fought us on their own ground, using their own subtle methods of warfare, and had beaten us. We belonged to them as long as we stayed there — yes, and for

longer. We had hired them in the beginning, and had striven to change them according to our ideas of the fitness of things, but in the end they owned us, and so will continue to do as long as the memory of them stays with us.

THE CHEAP BOAT

CHAPTER XVI

AS soon as we were home again, our first thought of course was a boat.

There are persons who know how to buy a boat cheap. Stan has pointed them out to me of October afternoons in the boatyards — hard-headed men, who stoop under, and prod with jackknives, the carcasses which in the summer are so alive, and which, pulled up in the fall, look to a land-lubber as though they could never float in water. These men hold altercations with the proprietors of the yards. In the summer one may see them making out in rowboats toward yachts at anchor which are for sale. Their talk runs like this: —

"I'm not buying a boat without seeing her out of the water, and I'll have to have her hauled up and painted anyway, and that'll cost a lot."

In the fall they protest: —

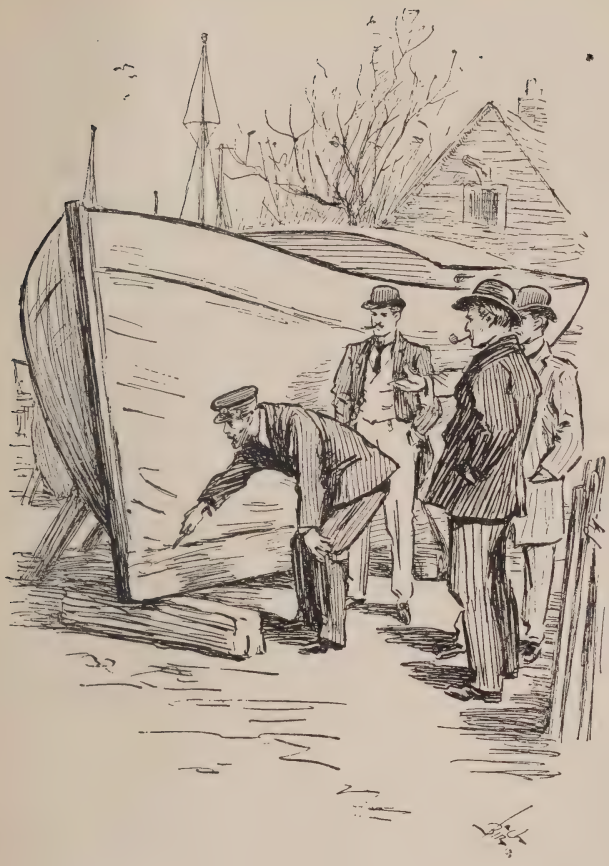
"You've got to think how much she's going to cost me to put her in."

It is said that these men buy an old boat

cheap, and sell her after a season's use for more than they paid. Traffic in boats is like bargaining for horses, and just as iniquitous. There are men who are always swapping a motor for a sailboat, and then swapping back again for a motor, and always getting something to boot, just as a canny horse-trader does.

Stan has always had a prodigious admiration for such men. He would like to do it himself. He always thinks that the next time he is going to do it. He even answers the advertisements in the "Rudder" of persons who wish to sell a perfectly good boat because they have bought a larger one. We were always making trips to little harbors up the Sound to look at boats advertised in the "Sunday Herald" — boats with fabulous inventories, to be bought for nothing at all. Usually we have n't the money to buy them at any rate, but the spectacle of a good boat going cheap has an impersonal fascination for Stan.

We have bought boats cheap enough, but they have been, frankly, old, tubby things — excepting the Marianna. We have invariably sold them for less than we paid; and with each new venture Stan's optimism rises. It is more



HARD-HEADED MEN WHO PROD WITH JACKKNIVES

than optimism. Once he owns a boat, it becomes beautiful to him, and he cannot understand that the world shall not regard what Phil contemptuously calls his "sea-going washtub" with the same kindly eyes that he does himself. But it inexplicably does n't, and so it has happened that we have never sold a boat for what we paid for it; indeed, one of our boats we had to give away, and the man to whom we gave it was embarrassed.

Stan's lack of the sharp instinct which makes a successful horse-dealer or boat-buyer has in no way dampened his hope. And at last the day came when he found the real bargain. He found it in a harbor on the Massachusetts coast.

Most of our sailing since we have been married has been done on the Long Island Sound, and Stan has always yearned for his own country, as a man must who has learned his sailing on the Atlantic Ocean. This is the reason why he has always spoken scornfully of the Sound, calling it a "lake." Along the Massachusetts coast one may have all the harbor sailing one wants, and along the south shore, besides, one may nose up little, salty rivers at high tide; but then, too, it is only half an hour from

any harbor to the open sea, with the long lift of the ocean swell under one's little boat. Off the Massachusetts coast is where the real sailing is, and when, one summer, we found ourselves in the country where Stan has always wished to be, it did n't take me long to understand why it is that Sound sailing has always seemed to him so tame.

The Sound, after all, is a yachtsman's country, the country of amateur seamen. They protest, there, but it 's so. There are, of course, honest fishermen in every harbor, and the farther one gets away from New York and the nearer to New London, the more of them there are; but at best their boats are hidden in the flock of white yachts. In New Rochelle harbor you would hardly be aware that there was such a thing as a sea-going boat, for the company of craft that gather there year by year are almost all for pleasure.

But here it was different. The flock of vessels which spread their sails out to dry in the morning sun were all boats built for work, fishermen's boats all of them, deep of draft, not too brisk in getting under way, not flyers in light airs, but able to carry sail with the best

ships in the world. On Long Island Sound the fishing boats had been ugly, dumpy affairs. When a yacht grows old on the Sound, she is apt to be bought by a lobsterman, who cuts down her sails and puts in a noisy two horse-power motor. One cannot help feeling as sorry for these boats as one does for a blooded horse who, after having started life as the joy of his master's heart, ends his days plodding stupidly in a grocery wagon.

But of the big fishing schooners which formed the fleet of our harbor, many were as beautiful as any schooner yacht which looms imposing over the small fry of the Sound.

Then, too, the talk here had not the pseudo-saline quality of the conversation of the rocking-chair fleet. Talk of the sea was the real language of the country. It was the real language, of which the yachtsman's talk is only an imitation. What corresponded to the rocking-chair fleet, the knots of seamen who sunned themselves on wharves, was made up of men whose lifetime had been spent in knowing what they were now talking about. Races, measurements, speed, the cut of sails, took up only a small part of their thought. The great ad-

ventures of the sea were their topics. Their phrases included the terminology of square-rigged-ships. I realized that here I was in a country where a shipwreck may be a commonplace of every-day life; that indeed there was hardly a family who had not had to put "Lost at Sea" upon some stone in the graveyard behind the town. It was important to them, of course, that boats should go fast, but what was far more important was that their boats should be able to stand out an ugly "outside." For "outside" to them does not mean what it does to us. It means the big sea close at hand outside the harbor, where every week the vessels go forth to the Georges, or to the Great Banks, or to the Nantucket Shoals, or to the coast of North Carolina, or to Iceland or Greenland. The sea talk is their speech. When you first hear a fisherman tell his wife that the "port light" (being a lamp to the left across the table) is smoking, you think it gentle humor. Afterwards you realize that these are the words which come first to his mouth.

I heard a gray-haired father call to his son, who was driving a "jigger," and whose reins were dragging: "Isaiah, look to your sheet to port and haul in the slack."

The local doctor had acquired unlimited sway over his clients because one day, when he was fresh from college, and, being a doctor, was not held of much account in the village, he made a miraculously right reply to a kindly old sea-dog who was trying to give him custom.

"You 'd better go up an' look at Lizzie," said the old man. "She 's got somp'n th' matter 'th 'er eastern nostril!"

"Which way was she headed?" asked the doctor.

It was one of these seafaring gentlemen who led us to our bargain. He lounged up to us saying: —

"Ye 're th' folks, ain't ye, lookin' f'r to buy a pleasure boat?"

"We 're looking for a boat," Stan admitted.

"Why don't ye buy Jim Cook's boat? Ye c'n have 'er cheap."

"What makes him want to sell her?" asked Stan, with suspicion. He always asks all the canny questions that a real boat-trader would ask.

"Why, his folks moved away. Used to come here summers, th' Cooks did — Cook's folks c'm from here."

Had we wished, we might have learned the entire history of the Cook family.

"She's lyin' up now in Ned Wally's shop. I'll show her to you if you want," he added, with that limitless kindness of which one will receive so much in our fishing towns.

"Are you in charge of her?" Stan inquired.

"No, but I heard you wanted a boat, an' I knowed Cook wanted t' sell. Ever sailed a boat?"

"Some," said Stan modestly. "My wife can sail a boat," he was kind enough to add.

"I want to know!" the man returned, his kindly blue eyes resting on me. "There wuz a woman sailed this un — she won a race in it."

"She did!" said Stan. "Let's see her."

"She ain't here no more — her folks has moved too."

"I meant the boat," Stan explained.

It was a Swampscott dory to which our old friend led us. Moreover, he found for us the man to whom the shop belonged, and the man to whose care the boat was intrusted, and then lounged away as he had come. The dory lay there in the old shed surrounded by fishing-nets and cobwebs, and in the company of the fisher-

men's dories that were laid up with her, she looked like a lady among a lot of scrub-women.

"How much is she?" said Stan.

The man named a price so small that Stan and I exchanged looks which meant: "What's the matter with her?"

THE CHEAPNESS OF THE BOAT

CHAPTER XVII

THERE was nothing the matter with her. It seemed as though you could have moved right into her and set up housekeeping without having to buy so much as an egg-beater, for on top of everything else she was even completely found as to fishing tackle. She had a brass traveler and brass blocks wherever a brass block could be. We went through the formula of decent deliberation concerning her purchase, although she was as good as ours from the first moment we heard her praises sung by the old captains about us.

"This boat," said Stan, "we will make really smart. She's going to look right. I've got time, and I'll fix her up myself."

We set to work at once.

"How much do you think it'll cost down here to put her into first-class shape?" Stan asked one of the old sea captains.

"To get her into first-class shape will cost ye a pile of money — as much as fifteen dollars," he answered.

"Fifteen dollars!" said Stan. "Well, to get her in first-class shape, I'd be willing to spend double that."

The old man gave him a contemptuous look.

"What would ye be spendin' thirty dollars on a boat like that for? Do you want to get her tiller bound with gold?"

So we started on a thirty dollar basis. First the tender, which was a graceful little craft, must have a grating. That would give her just the necessary touch of smartness. When that was finished, the ship's carpenter thought the dory would sail better if she had a new bottom. Then, the upper streak on the starboard side turned out to have a dint in it and had to be replaced.

While her hull was being made ready we had not been idle. We started out on the spars. We were going to save a great deal of money by doing the work ourselves.

"I'm going down to Ed Whaley's for a moment," said Stan. It is at "Ed's" that one buys everything pertaining to boats. One may also buy tools there. He returned with a shame-faced expression and a fine new spokeshave.

"Of course, if we're going to do the work ourselves, we can't be borrowing other people's

tools all the time," he said, in an argumentative tone. "I got," he added, "some scrapers and some sandpaper and a gallon of spar varnish, and I stopped in at Morton's and ordered from the city a few things they have n't got here. I 've ordered some oars that are light enough for you. And," he went on, with a growing air of exultation, "I 've ordered some brass letters and a new pump, by Jove, — the old one 's no good, — and a new pair of jaws and a couple of blocks where the old ones would n't work."

We spokeshaved the spars and put on four coats of varnish. We had to buy another gallon of varnish to do it, because the gratings had to be varnished too, and before we got the spars to suit us we had three new installments of sandpaper. We lost our scrapers twice in the sand, and our file, and we bought them twice over.

When we got through, the spars were a picture. By this time the carpenter work about the hull was done, and it was time to get the paint off. Stan insisted that every scrap of it should be removed, but removing paint that has hardened on a boat for five years takes time, and we were in a hurry to get the boat in the water.

"Besides," said Stan, "our time is worth something, and we had much better pay some one else to help us. We shall save more than his wages."

So an expert came to help us. He suggested potash. We bought six pails, two scrubbing-brushes, a sponge, two brooms, and three whisk brooms. Potash eats up brooms very fast. At the end of a week the outside of the hull was as clean as an egg-shell. In the meantime I had been painting the tender and scraping the old oars, and Stan then made the tender a present of a pair of brass oar-locks. He had also given order for a new tiller; the old one had been repaired, and Stan was going to have his boat fresh and new.

All the time we were feeling like millionaires because we bought the boat so cheap, because everything was so reasonable, and the man who helped us only charged two dollars a day. We had, besides, a set of Corinthian helpers, men who came lounging up the beach from nowhere, passed the time of day, set to work for an hour or so, and then ambled on. Stan would have liked to pay them, but with gentle courtesy they refused; and what was more, if one tried to hire

them, they refused too. They were n't working, they said. They were fishermen, ashore between cruises, and a helping hand to a neighbor — even though the "helping hand" lasted the four hours of a morning — was part of their scheme of life. But as soon as they had to work for pay, they felt as if their well-earned leisure was being encroached on.

It was a different state of things from that on the Sound, where as a matter of course one pays for every ten minutes' work, and where helping yachtsmen is part of the pickings one gets along the water front. Their kindly philosophy, which led to this marvelous independence, and their gentle patronage made us enjoy even more what we enjoyed so much already. We did not mind their patronizing us, for we realized from the first that our position here was different from that on the Sound. There yachtsmen are a power. The boatyards are supported by their money, and the boat-builders treat their whims with deceiving courtesy. But to the boat-builders and fishermen in our harbor a yachtsman is an amateur always. He does n't count there. There are not enough of him to make him more than an incident.

They humor him because they are kindly; they hand him the tiller of their boats, if he goes out with them, as a good shot lets a boy try his gun. They are spendthrift of the advice that experience gives to inexperience, and spendthrift too of kindness. We saw what our position was from the first, and accepted it with becoming humility.

They spent long hours in arguing among themselves as to the best way of applying potash. The work was stopped for half the morning while our helper disputed with a friend of his as to the strength of the potash we were using, the friend contending: "Your nails an' his'n 'll fall off if you don't weaken up some;" our helper asserting: "To get off paint like that, you got to get all the power you can."

It was a long time since I had sat in the warm sun, scraping and painting. It was the first time that Stan had had all the time he wanted to spend on his own boat. We did not try to hurry the work. Instead, we lingered over it, indeed, doing all the little extra things that we never had had time for in our hurry to get our boats in the water, in the days when Saturdays and Sundays were the only times when

we could go sailing. We took pains in licking on the paint in long, smooth sweeps. Not that my painting ever satisfied Stan, who put the same technique into painting his boat that a man might put into painting a portrait of his beloved. He was very kind with me about it, realizing that a girl cannot be expected to put on white paint with that finished subtlety that is reserved for the defter sex. It was only occasionally that he moaned to me: —

"Try to remember that painting a boat is a more careful job than whitewashing a cellar!"

When my back was turned, he did my work over before it should get dry.

This in no way dampened my spirits. I knew that too much cannot be expected of a woman. When it came to things like sweeping scrapings out of the inside of a boat, I shone. Stan somehow never could get the nooks and corners clean, and he was gallant enough to admit that I did it better.

Meanwhile, night after night the sun set over the sand-spit which inclosed the harbor, and struck the lighthouse with a shaft of light. It turned the clouds above us pink, and they cast their color back and the whole harbor was opal-

escent as a great seashell. Then the color faded, and the water turned soft gray; but for a few wonderful moments the homing sails would still be yellow as gold. And presently the lighthouses shone out signals of sunset and the sunlight went out and the gold sails too turned gray.

There were many homing sails in our harbor. In the mornings stately processions of schooners made out for the sea, one behind the other. Stan, who has seen strange countries, says that those sails looked like a procession of icebergs sailing majestically away from a glacier. They rounded the point, and the narrow sand-spit hid their hulls from us while the sails loomed incredibly tall above it. They were all going out after fish; and at night others came back, none of them without its tale of adventure, or what would have seemed to us adventure, and often with what would have seemed to a landsman danger. And at night they lay with their mains'ls up, huddled close together, just as the gulls huddled on the stakes of the fish weirs outside; and if the moon rose, it turned their sails silver, and if the tide were low, the moon burnished a copper path across the flats.

Though our harbor was so peaceful — almost land-locked from where we saw it — one could never forget the nearness of the open sea. Some days we could hear the waves booming on the coast a couple of miles behind us — days when our harbor was so tranquil that hardly a ripple lapped the beach. Almost always the deep sea swell set the whistling buoy moaning out its despondent "Do-on't, do-on't" — and a Cassandra among buoys it is, for they do, alas for the fishers' wives! And whichever way the wind blew, it brought the smell of salt into our nostrils, for our harbor was on a peninsula which is almost an island.

And throughout the long, still days — for we had weeks of bright weather — we overlaid on our boat incredible quantities of paint — incredible, I mean, to our new friends, who remonstrated with us, saying that two coats of paint were enough for any boat. And here Stan had the great triumphant moment of his life. He put on five thin coats — one or the other of us was always running to "Ed's" for a quart of turpentine, which appeared on the bill as "spirits" — and the Vaseline II grew whiter and whiter with each coat, and Stan's extrav-

agance was bruited abroad, and in the evening knots of people gathered to look at our boat.

"It ain't right to spend so much money in paint," I overheard one say, as we ourselves made our accustomed pilgrimage to admire her after tea. "Th' calkin' 's loose in his upper works."

"There ain't no odds in that," said another; "he 's got her white as a dove."

That was Stan's proud moment.

We bought green copper paint, too, for her underbody, in spite of the remonstrances of our assistant.

"'T won't last ye a season," he said. "They always use red around here."

And Stan, flushed with the pride of her whiteness, said: —

"I 'll paint her twice, if the first coat wears off."

He insisted, too, against every one's advice, on painting the iron ballast white. He thought it would look better under the grating. There was no nicety of detail in which we did not indulge our pretty boat. We mixed and remixed the color for the deck, with no less patient care

RUNNING TO "ED'S" FOR A QUART OF TURPENTINE

than an artist spends on a mural decoration. And all the time we continued to buy things for her in the way of small fittings, as one buys presents for a beloved child.

It was a foregone conclusion that she should have new rigging throughout, and we used bottle after bottle of aluminum paint on her stays. I also painted what little iron there was on her with aluminum paint; and during the season Stan and I dressed her up five times in a new dress of green and white paint. While we were getting her ready to put her in the water, Stan bought himself a complete outfit of carpenter's tools, on one pretext or another. Some he needed, some he liked the looks of, and some he felt sure he was going to need. Then, when we had her in the water, and when her sails were bent on, and she lay before us, the first smart boat we had ever owned, we felt the need of giving her a present for being so good-looking. We bought her a spirit compass and side-lights and a riding-light.

We might to this day have believed that we had bought a cheap boat but for Stan's inquiring mind. He had the curiosity to go over a list of expenses. They began like this: —

Work	$18.00
Carpenter's work	15.00
Ed Whaley's bill	27.50
Morton's bill	16.37

In all, it amounted to $150, including the price of the boat.

We stood one evening, soon after the launching, watching our expensive bargain dancing up and down at her mooring. Our old friend who had first led us to her joined us.

"It's a mighty smart boat you got for the money," he said. "Could n't 'a' cost you much, putting all the work on her yourselves. Looks good as new, she does. 'T would 'a' cost you an awful lot to have had her built. A dory like that you could n't 'a' had built under $185— an' then you would n't 'a' had so much brass."

Still, had we bought her new, we would n't have had so much fun as we had working over her, nor would we ever have loved her so well. Now that we had a new boat which, though small, was in perfect shape, and also a fast boat, we wanted to show her off to our friends. It was not long before we had collected Phil Temple and Mary Hollingsworth and Gregory.

THE "LEARNING" OF GREGORY

CHAPTER XVIII

WE have always known Gregory, of course, but we have not known him all the year round. He is one of our winter friends, not one of the all-the-year-round friends; and although Gregory flatteringly told us that it was ourselves who drew him to our home on Massachusetts Bay, we knew that it was Mary Hollingsworth. Nor did we blame him. When another woman meets Mary Hollingsworth on the street, she turns around and looks after her, and thinks to herself, "I wish I knew that woman." She is tall and straight, and her head is crowned with great braids. In the shadow it looks black; when the sun shines on it, it has little, mysterious red lights.

When Gregory first came, although she was glad to see him, he was eclipsed by a greater interest. Mary Hollingsworth was learning to dive. She was learning vaingloriously. She had learned to dive the very first day she had tried.

The way most girls learn to dive is this: they

stand on the edge of a raft and a man shows them how. The girl gets ready to dive, puts the palms of her hands together, crouches and touches the water with her fingers, and says, "Oh!" Then she asks the man to show her over again. By that time she has been in a wet bathing-suit for a good while, and a wet bathing-suit is bad for enthusiasm; so she says, "I don't think I'll get my hair wet to-day." I know this is so, because that is the way that I am learning to dive. I have never yet reached the point where I wanted to get my hair wet to-day. But in secret I think it is my nose — I don't like to get under water. Girls always hide their noses behind their hair.

Mary Hollingsworth, however, repaired to the raft with two girls who knew how.

"You begin," said the girl who was teaching her, "with a turtle dive — like this."

"That is simple," said Mary Hollingsworth. And she did it.

She came up from the water shouting, "I can dive!" It was no vain boast. She could. By the end of the next day she could dive standing up, without displacing too much water with her stomach, and the time is not far distant when,

THE NEXT DAY SHE COULD DIVE STANDING UP

standing on the edge of a springboard, she will describe a graceful arc in the air and enter the water without a splash, according to the best traditions.

Gregory would have liked to teach Mary Hollingsworth, but she was too busy learning to be bothered with men, which made Gregory go fishing for two days in succession. It seems that when depressed, Gregory takes to fishing.

It would have been demanding too much of human nature to have expected that Mary Hollingsworth would not be vainglorious. She was. She told all her acquaintances that she knew how to dive, and wrote letters to the rest about it. Gregory said that she stopped strangers on the street to tell them the happy tidings. But here he made the mistake of not being interested enough. A woman may sometimes feign interest in her rival, but it is requiring too much of man nature to ask him to do this; in fact, his air said that he did not think the dive was a lifework for a noble woman.

It is the instinct of most happily married women to pair off their friends who seem suited to one another as rapidly as may be. It is my instinct. I had no patience with Mary Hollings-

worth and her shilly-shallying, and I suggested that we should all go sailing.

Much good it did; for I reckoned without Stan and Gregory. Gregory had never been sailing in a small boat, but the mechanics of it fascinated him. Everybody knows boats can sail up the wind, but it is a miracle all over again to a person who has not tried to do it himself. You sail in one direction, the wind with you, and you give a touch to the tiller, you pull a rope — and lo, the boat sails in an almost completely opposite direction.

"How does it do it?" was what Gregory wanted to know.

He did not ask, however, as girls do, why the boat had to zigzag toward the wind instead of going straight into it. I observed this difference with my own small sex-humiliation. He asked right away how near the wind's course you could steer. With girls this question does not come before the fourth lesson, Stan asserts.

"Take the tiller yourself," Stan told him, "and see what happens."

He did, and made some little experiments in bringing the boat up too close and seeing the sail flap, and letting her off again.

"I see," he said, after a few minutes.

Mary Hollingsworth did n't see. "I can dive," said she irritatingly. But Gregory paid no attention to her. Stan had put into his hands one of the most fascinating playthings that there is: a small boat; and he was going to learn how that toy worked. To this end we circled around other boats, and there was Gregory, so absorbed that Mary Hollingsworth might have been called Mary Jane for all the attention he gave her. It was not the first time that I had seen a boat prove a successful rival to a woman, and I felt sorry for Mary Hollingsworth.

It had been a light air, just the one to teach a man sailing in, but presently it breezed up. We were sailing free, Gregory at the tiller. Stan reached out his hand.

"You don't want to jibe the boat!" he barked. "Here, let me take her."

He pushed Gregory into the standing-room, and before we could make a sitting-place, a flaw laid the boat over and Gregory fell ignominiously across Mary Hollingsworth's knees. Before he had picked himself up: —

"The centreboard!" said Stan. "Get down that board! Hurry up! I want to get about."

Gregory staggered to his feet. "I beg your pardon," he was saying to Mary Hollingsworth. "Awfully clumsy of me."

"Get down that board!" said Stan.

And here Gregory made the mistake that everybody makes once in learning to sail.

"What board?" he asked Stan.

I extricated myself from between Mary Hollingsworth and Stan, and managed to get the board down, and Stan brought the boat up just in time to save her bowsprit and the paint of a large black sloop which had been anchored ahead of us. There were fishermen aboard that sloop. They regarded us calmly.

"Summer boarders!" we heard one of them say.

That put the match to Stan's smouldering wrath.

"See here," he said to Gregory, as we sailed away, — it might have been his wife he was speaking to instead of his guest, — "the first thing you want to know, if you are going to sail a boat, is that when you are told to do a thing, you must do it — quick. You must n't stop and ask questions. There is n't time for that aboard a boat. And you must n't stop to

make apologies if you happen to step on some one's toes, when there's something to be done on the boat. You can make your apologies afterwards."

As we made for the point, our hated rival, an insolent boat, slid out from behind a big schooner. The racing gleam came into Stan's eye. It was our wind and our tack.

"About three inches more jib," shouted Stan. "No, Gregory, not you; you do it, Meg."

Gregory looked uncomfortable. It is not nice to have a girl passed over your head, especially if you are in the presence of a young lady whom you fancy, and who has just ostentatiously learned to dive; and besides, Gregory looked on this as his sail. He was to be taught sailing, and taught it right off.

We sailed along even with the Sprat, making, by unspoken agreement, for the outer buoy. It was dead to windward, and when we tacked, automatically I tended the jib sheet, which is, I suppose, the only thing on a boat that I do flawlessly.

Gregory watched me narrowly. Unostentatiously he sat himself down near the windward sheet.

"Ready about!" called Stan; and almost before the words were out of his mouth, Gregory hauled on the jib with a strong hand, and before the boom had swung over, the jib was trimmed to windward. The wind took the sail on the wrong side, and for a moment I was aghast. I thought the Vaseline II was going to hang in irons in a race! I expected an explosion from Stan, and it came.

"Slack off that jib sheet — quick! — slack it off, I tell you!"

Gregory stood helpless and bewildered. The good little Vaseline came about, however, and the jib flapped; and it was at this moment that intelligence came to Gregory, and he cast the sheet loose. The jib flapped protestation in the wind.

"Trim her down!" said Stan. "Trim her down, for the Lord's sake! Don't you know *anything?*"

But Gregory was too much bewildered to do anything, even if he had known what "trim her down" meant. Stan passed the tiller to me, shoved Gregory aside, and sprang to the sheet.

The Sprat forged ahead.

"The first thing you 've got to learn about

sailing a boat," said Stan, "is to do what you 're told."

These words were music to my ear. They had been said to me some years before, and in much the same tone. I know just how Gregory felt, and it was pleasant to know that the superior race had to learn their yachting in the same way.

We rounded the buoy a boat's length ahead of the Sprat, and started for home, gaining persistently. Gregory watched every movement of the tiller.

"See here, Stan," he said, "I 'd like to learn how to sail a boat."

With the Sprat a reasonable distance behind, Stan's temper was of the best.

"I 'll teach you, all right," he said. I do not know if to Mary Hollingsworth's ears this rang as much of a threat as it did in mine. To me it sounded as if Stan had used the menacing country term, "I 'll learn you!"

They learned him.

That evening, on the piazza, I had the pleasure of hearing Gregory explain the theory of sailing to Phil Temple.

"After all, it 's a matter of mechanics," he said.

"You leave the boat alone and she naturally comes up into the wind."

Phil turned upon him a quizzical gray eye. "Yes," he assented, "she comes up into the wind."

"Well, once you have got that through your head," Gregory went on, "it 's like understanding the theory of a lever. Your point of leverage is the fact that your boat comes up into the wind. That 's what sailing is."

Here Mary Hollingsworth announced, with her characteristic frankness, "I don't understand what that means." She never pretends to understand anything she does n't.

Gregory explained what it meant to her.

"You see," he said, "you turn your boat away from the wind in either direction, and immediately your lever is working. That 's what sailing is."

It sounded sublimely simple.

"Of course," he conceded, "there are lots of fine points to be learned."

"Several," said Phil, and puffed placidly at his pipe.

"A man has to learn those by experience, himself," said Gregory.

GREGORY LEARNS

CHAPTER XIX

NEXT day there was a gentle little lady's breeze blowing. Phil and Stan were off somewhere looking at a boat a man had just built for himself, and I was meditating how I could leave Gregory and Mary Hollingsworth alone without being too obvious about it, when Gregory himself solved the difficulty for me.

"Do you want to go for a sail?" he asked Mary Hollingsworth; "just around the harbor, I mean."

"Just around the harbor" is a matter of some miles, for ours is one of the most commodious on the Massachusetts coast.

"I have hired a little dory," went on Gregory, with a happy smile, "that is small enough so that if I get into difficulties, I can row you home."

Mary Hollingsworth got up promptly, and before my eyes those two people went off. I watched them out of sight, the little dory sailing free, Gregory at the tiller giving himself yachtsman's airs. I comforted myself with the thought

that they both swam well, and that they had oars in the boat.

When luncheon time came, there was no Mary Hollingsworth and no Gregory, nor a sign of them. Stan and Phil appeared, however, when I explained where the others were.

"Darned fool!" said Stan. "Now we'll have to go and get a gasoline dory and go after them."

"They can't come to any harm in this wind," said Phil. "Let's have lunch first."

After lunch we went out and scanned the horizon. This time, there was the dory, making for home. The wind had shifted since morning, and she could have made a close reach directly to our mooring. Instead of this, she was headed toward the beach above us.

"Isn't he going to land here?" asked Phil. "Whose boat's he got? — somebody's up the beach, likely, and he's taking her home."

But the dory came about and took a leg out to sea. Presently it came about again.

"He's tacking!" Stan exclaimed.

"I wonder what that's for," Phil meditated.

To my inferior mind, it was plain what it was for. They had gone out, sailing free — with the

wind — therefore Gregory had imagined that they must come back against the wind. His system of sailing had not yet included the fact that winds shift.

I told my theory to the men, at which they burst out into derisive laughter, for once not at me.

"I believe she's right!" chuckled Stan. "That's what's happened!"

The boat now was heading toward us, and the tide was ebbing rapidly off our flat beach. Suddenly the boat came up standing, at which both men shouted: —

"Pull up your centreboard! Your centreboard — pull it up!"

Gregory could n't hear them, but they continued to shout, "Your centreboard!" saying to each other in the intervals, "Why does n't the fool hoist his board?"

Instead, he pulled the sheet to and fro. Minutes went by, when finally I saw Mary Hollingsworth take her skirts purposefully in each hand and let herself over the side of the boat — the water was only two feet deep by this time — and wade with tranquil steadiness in to us. "I was n't going to stay any longer in that boat," she ex-

plained. It had been already evident to us that she was not. "I 'm starving!" Thus saying, she went in to lunch, and I accompanied her, while Stan got into our tender and rowed out to impart to Gregory valuable information concerning centreboards.

Over her lunch Mary Hollingsworth gave me a lucid account of what had occurred.

"We sailed on until Gregory said it was time to come back. He had calculated it would take him about one third longer. Stan, you know, had told him it took about one third longer to tack back from a place. And when we tried to turn around, the boat would n't turn. We tried everything. We turned the tiller every way, and nothing would happen, nothing at all. We just drifted.

"There was an old fisherman fishing near us, and he watched us for a long time. I told Gregory he ought to have rowed, and he ought to have,— we 'd have been back in time for lunch if he 'd rowed, — but Gregory would n't listen to me at all, he would n't row. He set his jaw and said, 'I sailed out here and I 'm going to sail back.'"

I smiled quietly to myself. Mary Hollings-

MARY HOLLINGSWORTH WADED ASHORE

worth knows a great deal more than I about most things, but there are some things that I can tell her concerning the way of a man with a boat.

"By and by the fisherman rowed over to us. 'Want to come about?' he said.

"'Yes,' said Gregory — I would n't have believed he could look so fierce.

"'Let down your board an' pull in your sheet,' said the fisherman, and he stayed there until Gregory did it, acting all the time as if it was the boat's fault. Then we tacked home."

She was artlessly proud of Gregory for knowing enough to tack home; otherwise, I could see she was disgusted with the obstinacy of the man who, when he might have rowed her back, wasted an hour in the hot sun for the sake of principle.

"It was very rude of Gregory, I think," she said disapprovingly, "to be late for lunch for a little thing like that, when he 's visiting."

Gregory soon appeared, but in a different mood from that in which he had started out. I could hear Phil saying to him: —

"You always want to remember, Gregory, that the operation of sailing a boat is like a

lever. She 'll come up in the wind if you let her alone. That 's the leverage point, you see. That 's all there is to sailing."

"But why," said Stan, "you should tack home, man, when you could have made your mooring on a reach —"

"Oh, shut up!" said Gregory wearily. "Let me alone!"

But Mary Hollingsworth caught up Stan's word. "Did n't he *need* to tack?" she asked, with indignation. That was the last straw.

"Oh," Phil soothed her, "there 's nothing to prevent a man's tacking if he wants to — if he has plenty of time."

But it is one thing for a woman to assault her own and another to see him sat on by others.

"I don't believe either of you sailed a boat a bit better when you began!" she flashed.

From this time on, Gregory sat at the feet of Phil and Stan. After this I took my ease in my boat. Gregory gave up any theoretical knowledge of sailing. He set himself to learn from the foundation, and took my place as cabin boy. His teachers spared no pains on him, each in his own way. Stan, of course, expected him to know for evermore the things he told him once;

his method was the direct and simple kind that was in vogue on old-time sailing vessels, where you hurled your command and the belaying-pin together.

Phil maintained a vein of gentle derision; he can do it without making you want to have him carried away.

"Have n't I told you," Stan would say, "how to make fast a sheet?"

"Making fast a sheet," Phil would add gently, "is different from tying a necktie."

But in spite of Stan's high-handed method and Phil's good-humored sarcasms in teaching Gregory to sail, their attitude, I could but notice, was very different from their attitude to me or any other girl. Although, of course, any one had only to sit one minute in the boat to see that Gregory was considered a beginner, he was not looked on as a hopeless beginner. "Promising stuff" was what his two friends evidently considered him. They had, too, their moments of tact when he had n't grasped some fine point. They were willing to let him make his mistakes that he might learn. At a moment when my sailing would have been cut short with a "Let me take the tiller now," Gregory was still allowed to

keep it, and find out what would happen; and it was not altogether because of this superior kind of teaching that Gregory learned so fast. Had I been a beginner at that time, and in a position to profit by all that Gregory learned, at the end of the summer Gregory would have been in a position to teach me. I admitted this humbly to myself, for my time of wishing to emulate the superior sex has passed. I went so far in the path of humility as to admit it to Stan, though it cost my vanity a pang to do this.

"Gregory learns to sail lots faster than I did," I ventured.

Stan gazed at me a moment tolerantly.

"Sure," said he.

GREGORY LEARNED

CHAPTER XX

THERE comes a time in every summer which is as distasteful as the tossing up and down in a calm. A flat calm is a peaceful thing when you are used to them, but to the landsman the slap-slap of sails and the purposeless tossing of a boat on a windless sea is more than human nature can bear. Certain days ashore are like this. There seems to be nothing left to do in the world; and instead of being a peaceful time, it is a time full of unrest. One would like to have something interesting to occupy one's mind, but there is nothing that one wants to do.

On such days men sit around underfoot, very much in the way. They do not take themselves off on any of their customary pursuits. They just sit there and look glum and complain. I don't know what women do when their menfolk get like this and they can't send them off to sea.

I had seen it coming for some time. Gregory

showed it by making himself so insupportable to Mary Hollingsworth that she went away for a walk alone, to get some exercise, she said. I don't know whether she got exercise; I know that she got sunburn and a great many mosquito bites. Phil and Stan showed it by quarreling between themselves as to the location of a certain reef off the Massachusetts coast. They quarreled listlessly, the way a baby cries when the weather is hot and it is vaguely uncomfortable and does n't love life any more.

"Why don't we go for a sail?" I asked; to which Stan replied: —

"Oh, what 's the good? There 's no place to go. You can't get anywhere in that darned boat. You just go out and then you come back. What 's the good of going?"

"I always told you," Phil chimed in, "that you 'd be sorry if you did n't get a cabin boat."

He had n't said any such thing. He had n't been there when we bought our boat; but Stan ignored this.

"I thought you liked Swampscott dories," he complained, in an aggrieved voice. One gathered that but for Phil he never would have bought a Swampscott dory anyway.

It was one of those awful days that wherever one went, one stepped on a bored man. There are times when men seem to multiply themselves, like children. Every mother knows those days when her small family of three or four seems to be a dozen children, all wanting something that's bad for them at the same time. And so with husbands and their friends. I have known days when it seemed as though I had four husbands at least, and as though each of these husbands had two friends, all needing to be amused; and yet when I boiled it down to common sense, there was only Stan and Phil and Gregory.

Their attention was diverted from their quarrel and turned to the imperfections of the poor little Vaseline. There she sat, bobbing gently up and down, as pretty a little boat in her class as one would care to find. But in the eyes of her owner and her owner's friends there were many things the matter with her that day. She had no cabin. She was only twenty-one feet long. Her freeboard was less than two feet. In fact, the matter with her was that she was a Swampscott dory at all. They eyed her distastefully. What they wanted the Vaseline to

be was a forty foot yawl, and because she was n't, they glowered at her.

There are times when just this sort of thing is the matter with a man's wife. She 's all right for her kind and class, but the trouble with her is she is as she is. You know all her virtues and all her imperfections. When the day is hot, there are mosquitoes. Oh, for the free life and the changing scene, and the girl you 've never met and the girl you don't own! Then the unusual wife rises to the occasion, and if she has n't unsuspected possibilities, she makes her man believe that she has. If she is not an unusual woman, she merely tries to efface herself.

A wise boat will act in the same way. The Vaseline II was an unusual woman.

Ashamed of his lack of loyalty, Stan gave out to Phil in an aggressive tone: —

"Say what you like, she 's the most reliable little boat I know. There 's many a bigger boat, and many a cabin boat, too, that does n't stand a seaway as she can."

Phil had not disputed this, but Stan made him feel as if he had. So he said scornfully: —

"You could n't go anywhere in *her!* My uncle had an eighteen foot jib-'n'-mains'l boat

that we used to cruise all up and down the New England coast in. We 'd be gone two weeks at a time."

"Did she have a cabin?" asked Stan.

"Cabin!" retorted Phil. "What does one want of a cabin? She did n't need a cabin. We used to just put in nights at places."

Here the Vaseline II bobbed up and down and pointed her nose toward Plymouth.

"You 're always saying," Stan went on, "that you never saw another little boat that handled as well as your uncle's boat — I would n't have sailed in her — except this."

"Well, why can't we go to Plymouth, then?" asked Phil. "What 's the matter with going to Plymouth? What 's the matter with taking a little cruise?"

Have you ever seen the breeze spring up on a sultry day, and watched the effect on the tempers of the people about you? This is what happened to those three men. They had been sitting around, a hard burden for any woman to bear; and now, at a word, they had something to occupy their minds. They played with the Plymouth plan and its objections. I was one of Stan's objections. The opinion of the local fish-

erman was another. It was not a new plan, the voyage to Plymouth, and the careful fisherman had scoffed at it until Stan's spirit had been quelled. For there is just one authority that is higher than Stan's own. He is his own authority as to what his boat will do or will not do, or on what day he will take out his boat, in the face of any other *yachtsman.* He is as weatherwise as any man. If Phil Temple says, "I think it is breeding a thunder-storm," Stan will instinctively argue the question with him. But let an old fisherman appear on a bright June morning, when the weather is cloudless, and say that it smells as if it was breeding weather — Stan will reef his boat. Everybody has to have some public opinion to which he bows, and Stan's public opinion is the New England fisherman. He would rather be thought a good sailor by the hoary members of any of those fishermen's clubs which may be found of a warm day basking on any wharf and swapping sea gossip, than win a race against a boat of twice his sail area.

So he quoted what the fisherman said to Phil, against the expediency of taking a twenty-one foot boat to Plymouth. He called Captain Newcomb into the conclave, a modest old man, who

HE CALLED CAPTAIN NEWCOMB INTO THE CONCLAVE

"allowed" that he had never followed the sea much, only a matter of upward thirty years.

"If I had two boats," he said judicially, "and one was a cabin boat and the other was n't a cabin boat, I 'd go in the cabin boat. But if I wanted to go to Plymouth, and the weather looked like it was going to stay just about so — why, if I wanted to go to Plymouth in my own boat, I 'd go to Plymouth."

That is it, you see. You 'd go to Plymouth in *your own* boat — not in somebody else's. You can't trust other people's boats.

"I don't say," he added, "that I 'd go in that dory of yourn — she 's over-sparred — but I had a little catboat once — not more 'n eighteen feet she was — and I cut down her big sail and I rigged what you might call a jib, and by heck, I 'd gone anywhar in her — I 'd gone to Afriky in her!"

A new toy will change a fretful child into a pleasant one, and a new idea to play with acts much the same way for grown people. Stan's reasons for resisting it I have told. Gregory had his reasons for not wanting to go — they were Miss Hollingsworth, and he did n't tell them. But Phil Temple had a free foot.

"If you will lend me that boat for a day," he said, "I'll take her to Plymouth — and I'll bring her back."

When I heard this, I went into the house and began putting up a two-meal lunch for three men. By the time I had filled the demi-john with water they were ready to go. They started out without enthusiasm. One cannot always get over being bored all at once. They were none so pleasant up to the last moment that I was n't glad enough to say good-by to all three of them.

Now see what an ocean voyage will do for a rightly constructed man. The next night there landed on our beach three gentlemen, as pleasant as I would care to meet, overflowing with spirits, full of tales of the strange ports they had visited and the adventures that they had had under way. I advise any woman whose husband has got to seem like three, and all cross, to send him off to Plymouth. And, cabin boat or no cabin boat, I advise her not to go along.

There are times when it seems that a great deal more happens when one hears about it than when one is there one's self. If I had been there, for instance, besides being in the way, I

never should have realized just what had happened to Gregory. Gregory started out a landsman — a landsman who was permitted now and then to hold the tiller and to haul a rope. He was a promising landsman, who took hold of things with gratifying intelligence; but he was a landsman, nevertheless. Gregory returned from Plymouth a yachtsman. He had seen some real sailing, and he had risen to the occasion of knowing that he had seen it, and glorying in it. I saw how the balance between them had shifted the moment I set eyes on them. Gregory was doing most of the talking. I cast then an eye toward Stan, but he did n't exchange knowing glances with me. His knowing glances were for Gregory. I know the signs. I have seen many men passed over my head into the fellowship of yachtsmen.

To any one not fond of sailing, they would seem to have had quite an uncomfortable time of it; but there is that in the nature of the yachtsman which makes it necessary for him once in so often to take a trip where he shall be wet and cold for a number of hours; to take a trip where the wind shall blow uncomfortably hard for the boat that he is in; where there shall not be any

dry place to sit, even if there was any portion of one's self dry enough to be sat on. Then, if you shall enjoy all this, if you shall get an exhilaration out of wet and cold and the spice of danger, and a joy out of seeing your little craft behave handily in adverse circumstances, and if you yourself shall know how to help her to behave, you may fairly claim to have the makings of a yachtsman in you. And this is what Gregory had done. He had proven himself. And what showed it more than anything else was Stan's attitude towards him, and Phil's. They talked their yachtsman's talk to him now like a brother. That subtle difference of manner in discussing the affairs of boats among themselves and when talking to an outsider had gone.

I tried out Stan about this. I always do. It pleases him. He likes to talk about girls on a boat. "Lots of girls," I said, "Mary Hollingsworth, for instance, would have enjoyed it all just exactly as much as Gregory."

"Yes," said Stan, "girls like getting wet. They act as if they were out to get a shower bath instead of to go sailing. They squeal when the spray of a wave catches them, and say, 'Oh, is n't it fun! Can't we get wet again?' and then

they go and sit down on the main sheet! But a man with stuff in him just takes things as they come, and knows how not to get in the way."

I don't know if this is true, but I know that all yachtsmen think it is true, and it might just as well be so, whether it is or not.

BROKEN IN

CHAPTER XXI

AND Gregory had done more than enjoy things and keep out of the way. The test of whether you have the makings of a yachtsman in you is whether you can apply in an emergency the knowledge of seacraft that you have gained in harbor sailing — apply it instinctively, too, without being told, and Gregory had gloriously done this. He knew he had done it, and I felt in my bones that by next year I should humbly be going out sailing with Gregory as skipper, who in as many months of sailing as I had had years would beat me at my own game.

"Besides," added Stan, "this was really no trip for Mary Hollingsworth or any other girl. It was a little too warm for that. A girl — with all due respect to you, my dear — is out of place in a boat when you have to bail. Her skirts get full of water and she is heavy; she increases the dead weight and does n't distribute it properly."

It dribbled out later that far from being en-

cumbered with skirts, Gregory's clothes had got so wet that he removed all but his shirt, which may be Stan's idea of too warm a sail, for he recounted with unction later: —

"Gregory 's game all right. We ran into a smoky sou'wester about halfway across, and it jolly well blew. We had to put in two reefs, and even then she took in water. Then we got into the head tide out of Plymouth harbor. It took us four hours to cover the last two miles up to the breakwater, and the sun was low and the wind was blowing, and oh, mamma, how cold it was!" said Stan, with admiration. "And your little friend Gregory chose this time to take off his trousers and hang them up in the rigging to dry! I don't see how he stood it, with the wind whistling through his legs. But he never turned a hair!"

Under the circumstances, I could agree that it was no place for me and Mary Hollingsworth.

The story of this progress up Plymouth harbor came to me in sections. Phil Temple confided to me: —

"We most got hung up on the flats once, and if Gregory and I 'd listened to Stan, we

might have been there all night, for the tide was running out. Her centreboard was stuck a little, that was all. 'You can't hoist that centreboard,' Stan said. 'It's jammed. We'd better try to pull her off.' But there was n't time for that, with the tide running out as it was, and I knew it. So Gregory and I just got hold of it, and Stan sat and laughed. But Gregory got his weight on it, and up she came, and we got her off."

Thus Phil Temple.

Stan's account went as follows:—

"Phil thinks he knows all about Plymouth harbor. He was going to pilot us up that channel. The harbor is mostly mud-flats — at low tide it looks like a good place to play lacrosse — with a brook running along one side, and there's only one way to get in at low tide, that 's through the brook. It was about half tide, and we had the whole board down, and Phil took a leg way up into shallow water. I could see the crabs and eel grass scooting along underneath, and I said to Phil: 'You 'd better hoist that fin.' 'Shut up,' said Phil, 'I 've sailed out of this harbor fifteen years in my uncle's boat.' 'You 're the skipper,' said I. Just then the cen-

treboard fetched a hump in the mud, and we came up all standing. Gregory and I got oars and lifted her off, and I went back to hoist the board, but Phil would n't let me. 'That 's the last hump,' he said, 'we 'll need all the board with this wind.' And then she fetched hard and keeled over."

To a woman, just why the sojourn in Plymouth should have been so reconstructive seems esoteric. It seems that they slept at a very bad hotel, and that the whiskey which they needed after their soaking was hard to come by in a temperance town. Moreover, Phil, being known in Plymouth, and having preserved his clothes more or less respectable, was not proud of the costumes of my husband and Gregory. Yet whenever these three friends meet, they talk about the grand time they had in Plymouth.

However, the sail home was the triumph. I could have told so by the number of places there were to be mended in the sails. Almost as soon as Stan landed — "Where 's the sail needle, Meg?" he said.

"The sail needle?" I asked.

"Yes," said he, in an aggrieved voice.

We had had sail needles three years before,

but since then we had been to Europe for a space of two years, and at the end of this period Stan expected me to produce the sail needle—from my pocket, apparently, and I had n't a pocket. I was aggrieved. One never quite learns how to be a yachtsman's wife.

"I have no sail needle now," I told him.

It seemed to me mighty unreasonable that after three years I should be expected to produce a sail needle on call. I complained of this to an older woman, whose husband had been a seafaring man.

"Why, yes," she said. "Of course a man wants a sail needle every now and then. For twenty years I was called on from time to time to produce sail needles."

And when I reflected that she had traveled about much more than I, and yet apparently could put her hand on a sail needle, if asked for it, in the middle of the night in the dark, I reflected that women of an older generation were made of better stuff. I am sure that my old lady, who sat darning her husband's sock in her new yawl, would always have known where the sail needle was, and the palm too, and have had a piece of canvas for patching, as much

a matter of course as she would her own thimble.

They had come home flying before a fair wind, and they had crowded on her every bit of canvas, as if they had been so many schoolboys. This is what the unpleasant trip and the disagreeable sojourn in Plymouth had done for their spirits. The Vaseline II is over-sparred and carries light sails suitable for harbor racing, and she had blown out a hole in her mainsail and two in her spinnaker. It had been a glorious day. The crowning point had been the setting of the spinnaker. It was no day for spinnakers. But with it on, they had beaten in two fifty foot fishermen, besides a yacht twice their size. It had been just blowing up to the very limit of danger to her spars, and they had taken chances and won.

I heard Gregory telling this to Mary Hollingsworth, for, though I was there and know more about boats than she does, and really ought to be a better comrade for a new yachtsman, it was to Mary Hollingsworth he told it.

"The waves were so high," he said, "that when we were in the trough we could see nothing but water, and we were going almost as

fast as they were. There is no movement like it! It 's a little like being on an intelligent horse, only better. We would race along on top of one of those waves until it gradually passed beyond us, and then a new one would catch us astern and the boat would bend her head down just like a horse, ready to toss it again for a fresh burst of speed at the top of the next crest. The moments at the top of the crest, when her head is up, and she is racing with the wave and the water is rustling away from the sides — there is nothing like it!"

And saying this, Gregory drifted away, taking Mary Hollingsworth with him.

To a landsman there may not seem to be any connection between sailing a boat in one's shirt only, with one's trousers hanging in the rigging, and having the courage to win the girl of one's heart. But I can very well understand how that should be so. Gregory came home a proven yachtsman. I know that the feeling that you can conquer a boat makes you feel that you can conquer the world, and the incidental girl thereof. And so it happened that the balance shifted between Gregory and Miss Hollingsworth. It was her turn to do as she was told

instead of Gregory. That is one of the many things that came of the trip to Plymouth that would not have happened had we been along; for more things happen on a trip where one is not than where one is.

I did not mind that I could not have been on this trip, and I think the fact that I did not mind shows that I have gone far on the road to being a good yachtsman's wife. I was content to take my proper place in the world, content to go out on the days when a woman is no responsibility to her men, and content to let them go off on their cruises and listen to the wonder tales that they bring back. In the first years of my life as a yachtsman's wife I could n't bear to be left out of anything. I was afraid of missing something. I had n't realized then that the Ulysses tales with which they came home would have seemed so much less had the adventures happened under my eyes, and that my very presence would have let fewer of them happen. I am only glad now that I have been made so welcome by my husband and his friends for so much of the time.

Of course I shall unlearn many of the things I have learned, just as I have partially unlearned

knowing how to sail, and as I go on I shall learn things that seem unimportant to me now. The older I grow, the more I desire to pass my days happily on the water, without the anguish of the casual guest out on a sail to trouble me. I should like to have my chosen friends about me. But by preference I would hear Stan and Phil Temple wrangle, while young Morris loafs in the shadow of the sail and digs deep into the depths of his soul. Or I would like to sit by and listen to Phil and Stan teaching Gregory to sail.

My chief care will always be trying to keep Stan from buying any kind of a boat that presents itself, in moments when life seems to him to stop unless he can own something with sails and that at once. I have seen him, on the verge of bankruptcy, negotiating for a venerable thirty foot catboat on Peconic Bay, a notorious boat, which all the harbor knew carried a lee helm. I have, as you know, sat on the shores of the Mediterranean holding my breath while Stanford bargained for an unseaworthy boat built on a model fashionable 20 B. C. I have shut my eyes while the angel of the Lord passed along and spared me and Stanford. I do not talk at these

times; I only keep quiet, and trust that some luck will hold back Stan's hand.

These are the things I fear, and for every year that passes that sees us clear from buying Noah's Ark, I give thanks. Stan is sure to pass through a crisis at least once in two years.

I have talked a good deal with the wives of other yachtsmen, and each has his own private mania. Now, it is racing. Again, it is the mania for specklessness, which makes the master of the boat follow his guests around and insultingly rub off any bit of brass or woodwork they have touched. This is a form of madness especially hard to bear. There are others who carry to an extreme the yachtsman's etiquette. And the young yachtsmen do crazy, foolhardy things in keeping on all the canvas during a storm, and in other ways trying to get themselves drowned.

I have had a comparatively easy time of it, since I have been well broken in, for Stan's sudden and violent passion for some derelict does not come often. On the other hand, my life is made pleasant by my own little fad, which is the love of fussing around my boat. This is a very ordinary form of the yachtsman's madness, and you have only to go to any harbor or boatyard

ROWING OUT TO HOIST SAILS AFTER THE RAIN

to see a number of harmless and gentle creatures busy with paint-pot and scraper.

As I look over the various summers of my married life, I see myself constantly at work upon some boat. Sometimes I see myself under a boat painting away, a pot of copper paint beside me. I smell again the smell of spar varnish as I put the finishing touches on a dinghy. I see pictures of a certain sail-maker's attic full of mounds of billowy white sails, among which there were always a lot of kittens playing. I used to go there for new sails and to urge that they should be made promptly.

But oftenest I see myself in a dinghy rowing out of harbors to hoist sails after the rain, and then making another long trip to take them down again.

I have loved it all—I have even snatched a fearful joy from the moments when Stan has threatened to buy some impossible boat. I hope that Time, which lops off one of my pleasures after another, will leave me my pleasure in my boats, so that a shipyard will seem to me always as pleasant a place as it does to-day. And that I shall love to sail in whatever weather, and have always a tranquil patience in a calm.

I like to think that I shall be like the old lady on the Mary Ellen, and that I shall sit placid in the cockpit of my boat, while the sun sets over the harbor, and Phil and Stan quarrel as to which could best take the Massachusetts through Hell Gate.

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